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# THE *Atlantic*



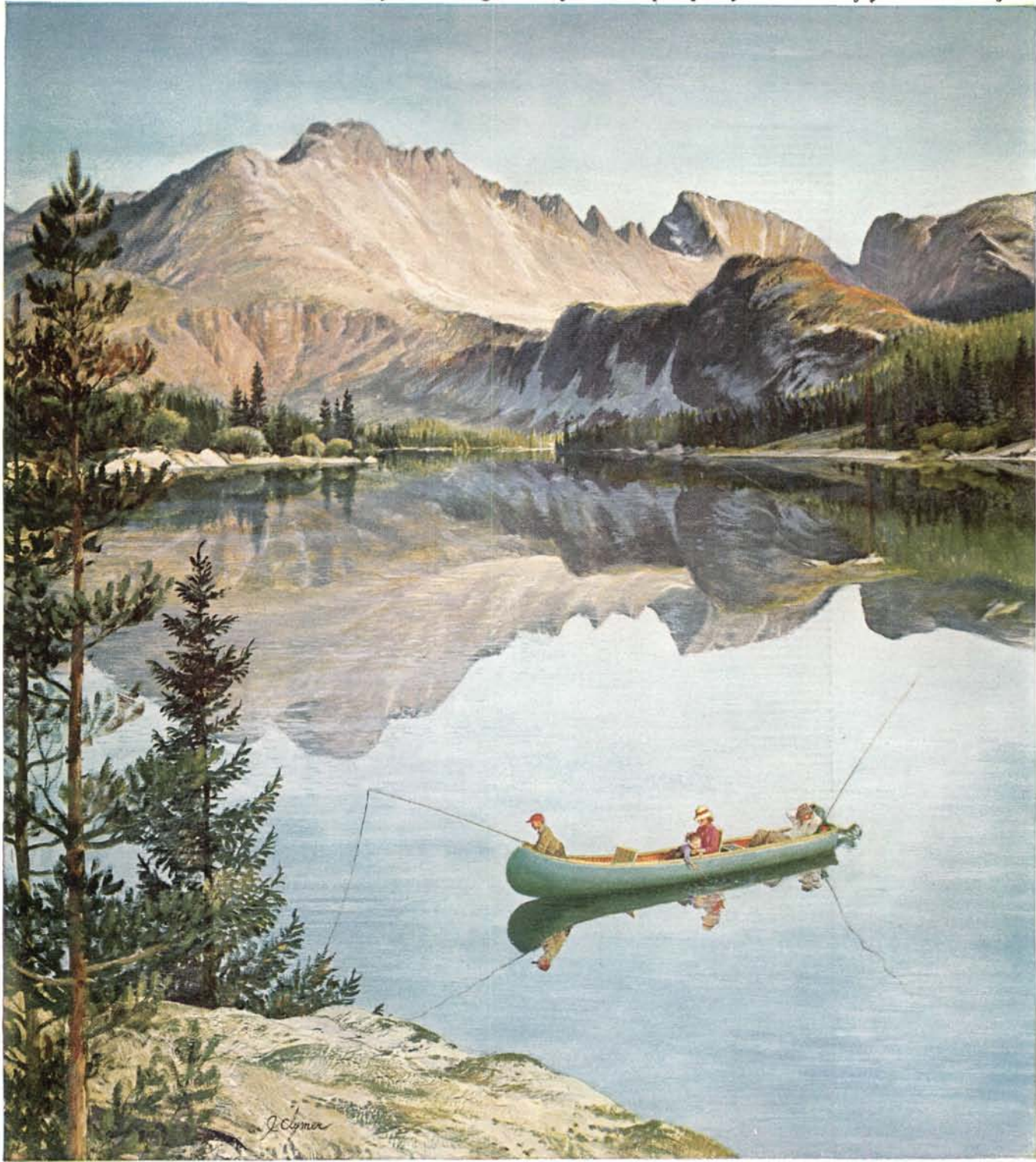
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*An artist's conception of the astronaut's capsule in orbit*



*Black lines represent expected orbits of the astronaut's capsule. Project Mercury ground stations will be close to the orbital path*

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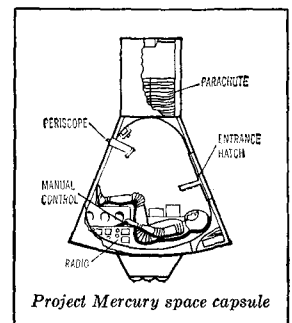
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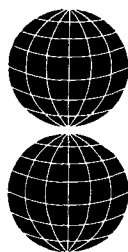
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## WASHINGTON

**T**HIS year," said Adlai Stevenson in his first speech after a long visit to Latin America, "we will be making a choice between two approaches. We shall have to decide whether to go on putting private consumption first or shift the first priority to our public needs." In looking forward to the presidential campaign between the two men who will be nominated at the national conventions in July, the big question is whether Stevenson is right in his appraisal.

The point of elections in a democracy is to permit the public to pass on the record of those who have held the public trust and to choose between candidates on the basis of their promises to perform if elected. This, of course, is the ideal. As everyone knows, personalities often dominate issues and issues often are twisted out of all recognition in the heat of a campaign. But there is no other way in a democracy, and 1960 is no exception.

President Eisenhower continues to be immensely popular. Yet there is a disquiet in the land, a feeling that the United States is losing its supremacy abroad and is not meeting the problems of its expanding population at home. Everyone is for peace and prosperity; the problem for the presidential candidates is how to articulate these issues between July and November.

On the peace issue, a great deal will depend on events outside the United States, most specifically on the acts and attitudes of the Soviet Union and Communist China. But as to prosperity — meaning all our internal well-being — a great deal can be done by the candidates themselves to put the issues before the electorate. A presidential election offers the only opportunity for soul-searching on a national basis, as compared with congressional elections, in which state and local considerations generally are dominant.

Vice President Nixon, as the probable Republican nominee, cannot wander far from the spirit and the record of the two Eisenhower Administrations of which he has been a part. He can give the Republican philosophy a forward look and most certainly will. But fundamentally, he must operate on the thesis that America today is basically in a conservative mood; that while the nation wants and needs change, the changes must be gradual to the point of being conservative; that they must involve a minimum of federal action, lest the nation be run entirely from Washington.

Whoever gets the Democratic nomination will take his stand toward the liberal side of this Nixon philosophy. The degree of the difference and the extent of the articulation of differences will naturally depend on the nature of the Democratic candidate. Three of the contestants — Stevenson, Senator Kennedy, and Senator Humphrey — share similar views. The other two candidates — Senators Symington and Johnson — are by nature more conservative, though Symington's voting record parallels those of Kennedy and Humphrey. Johnson alone of the group is a self-proclaimed centrist, though it was he who first labeled the Democrats as the "party with a heart."

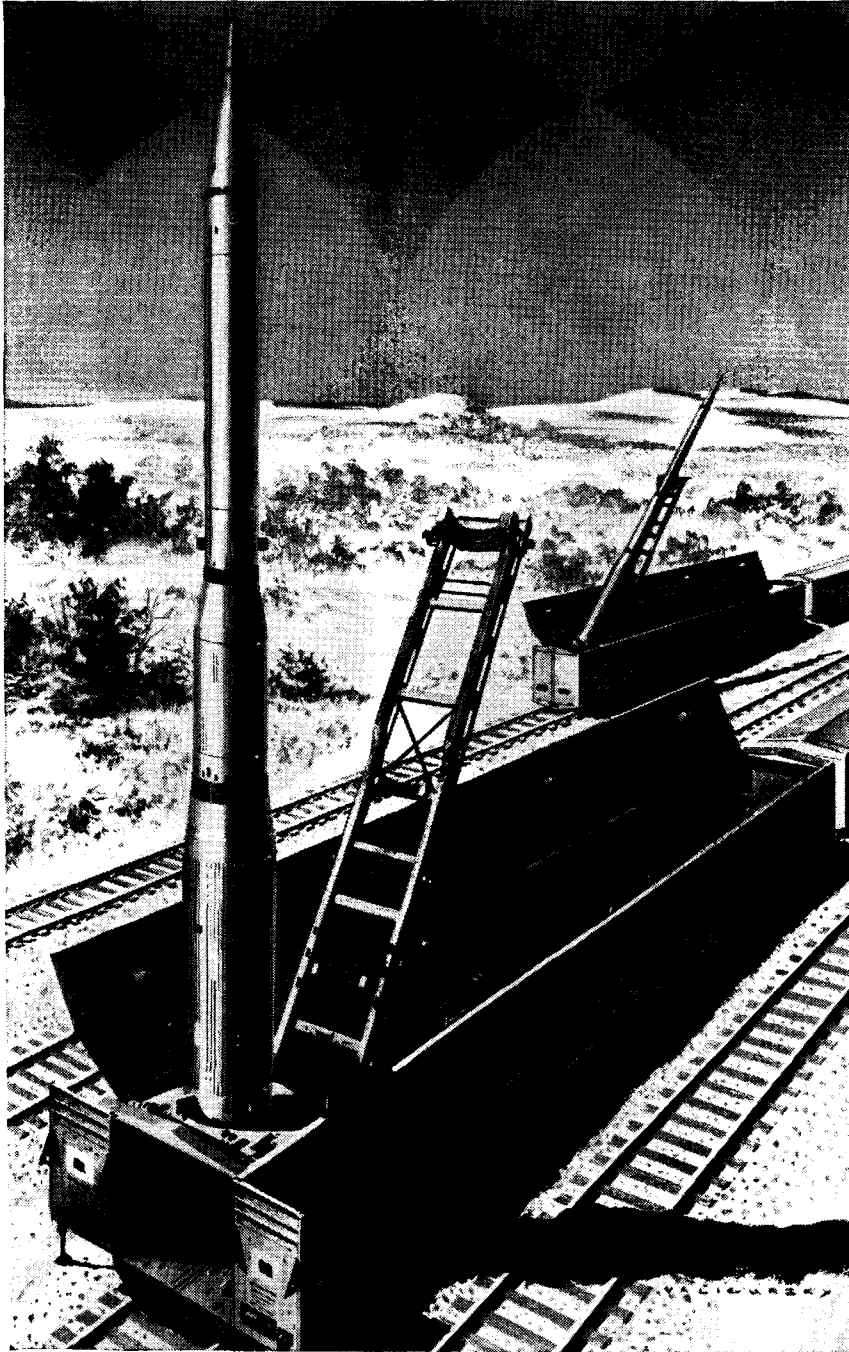
### **Our public needs**

In one way or another, all the Democratic hopefuls have been asking what Stevenson asked: Why did America spend "more money last year on tranquilizers than on space exploration, and more on leisure than on learning"? All have asked why the richest nation in the world cannot support the public services and facilities we must have, not only for world power but for national growth and opportunity.

A host of questions have been bothering Americans of late, but it is uncertain whether the sum of



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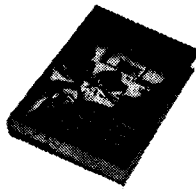
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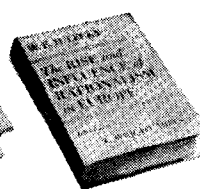
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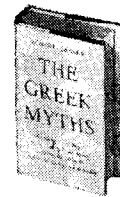
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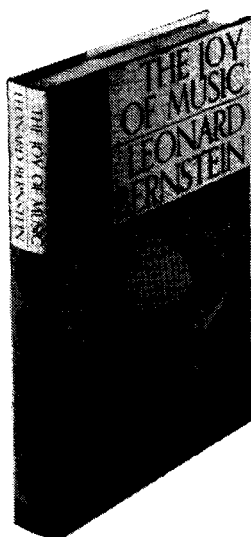
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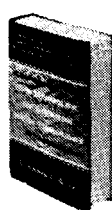
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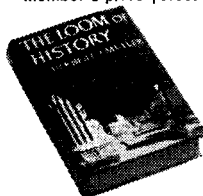
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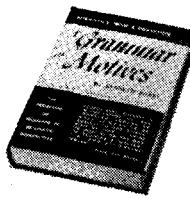
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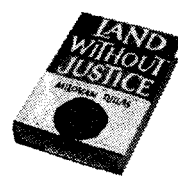
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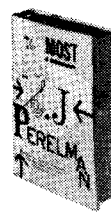
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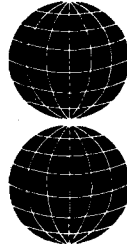
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## Report on Washington



the worry will produce sufficient votes to put a Democrat in the White House. Is there as yet a public consensus that the federal government must do more in such areas as aid to education, medical aid for the aged, public housing, slum clearance and urban renewal, aid to depressed areas, help for cleaning up polluted streams and for water development, new programs for the farmer, and further action on civil rights for our Negro citizens?

On these issues, individual senators and representatives can win election to Congress. But can a candidate win the presidency on such issues? And can he win if he combines them to proclaim, as Stevenson has done, that the nation must decide "whether to go on putting private consumption first or shift the first priority to our public needs"?

It is true enough, as Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana has said, that "in this nation, whether it is recognized or not, it is the federal administration which sets the tone. And as the tone is set, so rings the bell." But must this fact be generally recognized if the Democratic nominee is to win in November?

Shortly after the sweeping Democratic congressional victory of 1958, one of the Senate's liberal Democrats, Joseph S. Clark of Pennsylvania, called the election "not a mandate to stand still" but rather "a mandate to move forward." Subsequently, however, there has been only moderate movement. Clark was a ground breaker, but the presidential campaign will determine whether there is now a real issue to be decided by the voters.

### The five fallacies

Clark argued that progress was held back by five main fallacies "assiduously cultivated by conservative molders of opinion": the fallacies that private spending is inherently good and public spending is inherently bad; that the federal government is crushing the people and endangering the economy with its high taxes, big expenditures, and mounting debt; that federal spending is itself inflationary; that all federal expenditures are alike, whether for payrolls and arms or for public resource developments; that if the federal government lets the states take over many of its functions, this would ensure economy.

The election ought to determine whether these fallacies, as Clark sees them, are accepted by a majority of the people or not. The evidence so far from the various primary campaigns this year indicates that the people want much more done but have not faced up to the reality of the cost. In West Virginia, for example, a taxpayer asked Humphrey who was going to pay the bill for all the improvements he advocated. And the taxpayer did not seem convinced when Humphrey shot back: "Just exactly out of our taxes. You get the best buy of your life out of your tax dollar."

Presidents, and presidential candidates, are in large part prisoners of their times. But there is a choice available to them between riding what appear to be popular tides and attempting to point up issues which are at the moment not widely articulated or even recognized. The year 1960 would appear to be the time for a forthright approach. By election day it will have been more than three years since the Soviet Union launched the first sputnik and broke the complacency of post-war America.

There is a stirring in the land, but it has not yet been brought to focus. The campaign of 1960 could be memorable if the two presidential candidates succeeded in offering to the voters a choice for America in the new decade.

### Senator Byrd and civil rights

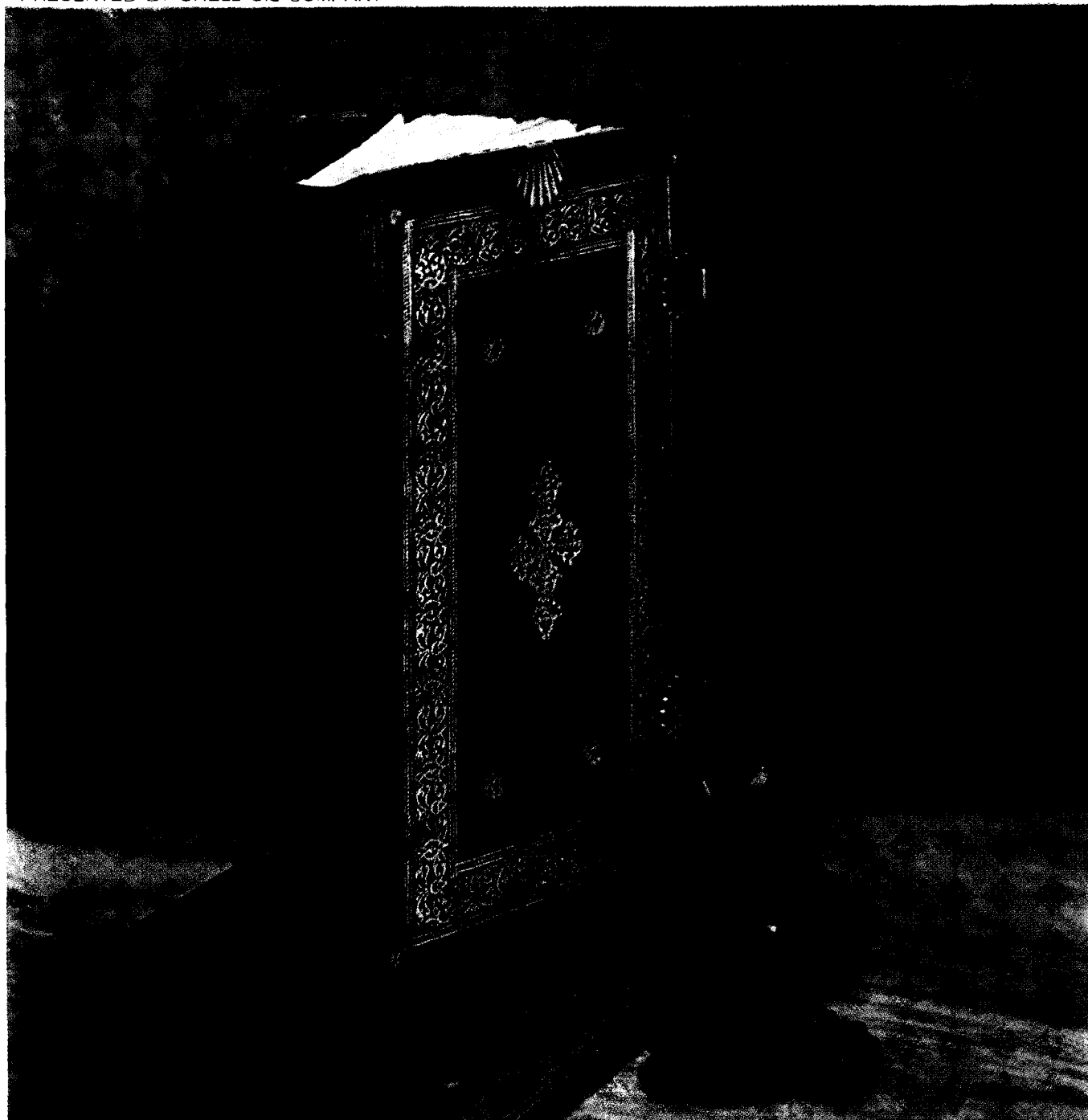
The night that the 1960 civil rights bill passed the Senate at the end of eight weeks of almost continuous debate, Senator Jacob Javits, the New York liberal Republican, described it as "a victory for the Old South." And Virginia's ultraconservative Democratic senator, Harry F. Byrd, agreed that "in the main the result has been a victory for the South," at least in comparison with the original bill's "punitive" provisions.

This is the second civil rights bill to pass the Congress in modern times. Like the first, it was overadvertised as a cure-all for the problems of the Negro in the South. Yet, like the first measure, this one will assist the Negro in his struggle toward human equality in the United States. Laws alone are often meaningless; the spirit of their enforcement more often than not is the critical measure of their importance. So it probably will be with this year's measure.

The 1960 bill was passed in an election-year atmosphere, and though it is generally unknown, the man responsible was Byrd himself. Last year, at a caucus of the Southern senators, it was proposed to let a bill pass in the hopes that it would be more moderate than an election-year measure would be. But Byrd was adamant; he refused, and the others bowed to his dictate.



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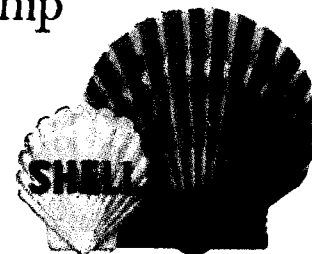


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## Why nature so often inspires superb craftsmanship

Somewhere in Florence in the late fifteenth century, a fine Italian hand designed this lovely calf binding to encase an illuminated manuscript of Francesco Petrarca's love poems. Seeking to embellish his handiwork, the binder turned to nature and its decorative forms. Like so many artists and craftsmen before and since, he found in the scallop shell the particular grace and simple beauty he sought.

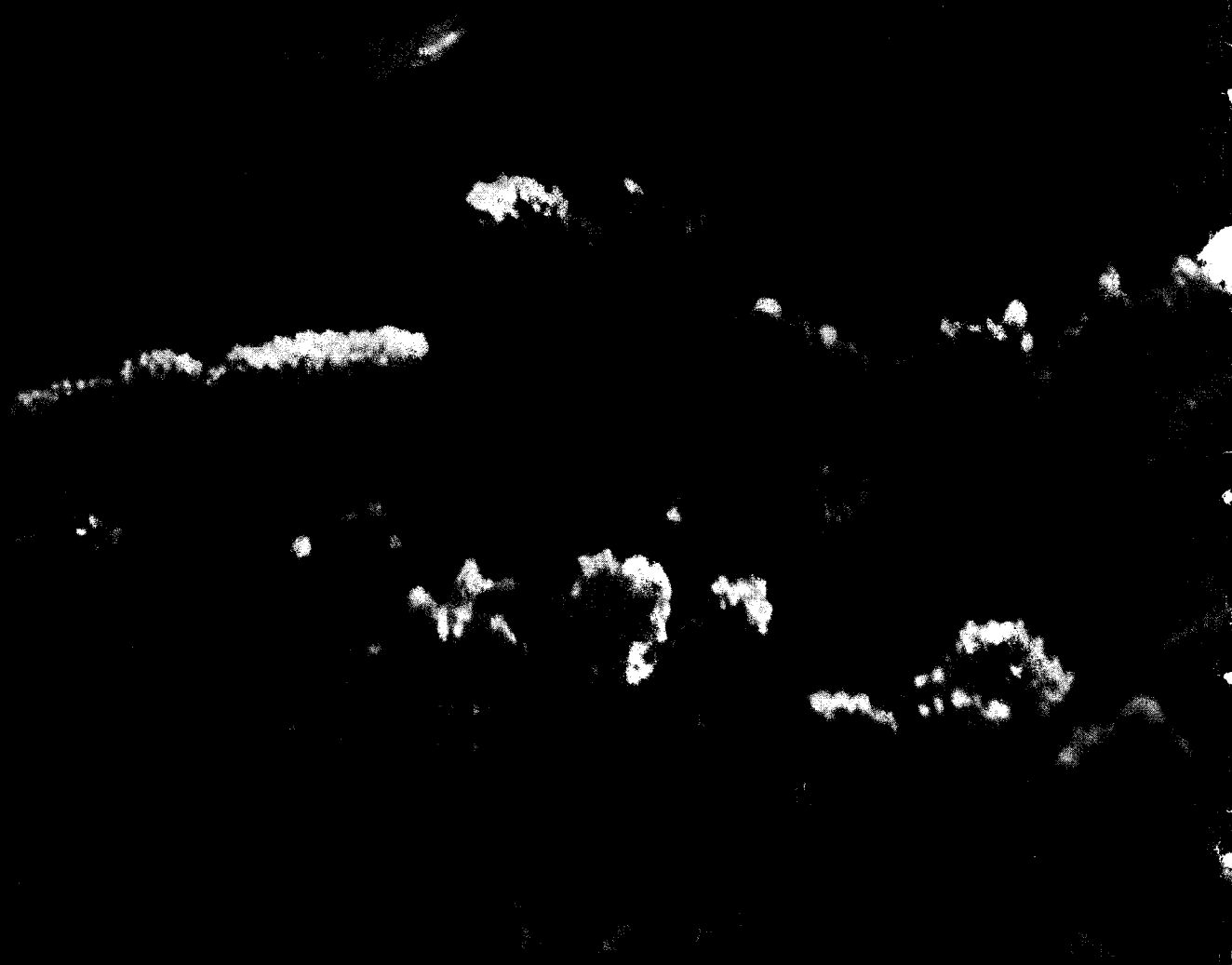
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"Full fathom five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made."

## How the "flower animals" of the sea gave a cue to chemistry

The lovely rock gardens in our photograph are coral—the skeletons of innumerable tiny marine polyps called Anthozoa, meaning "flower animals."

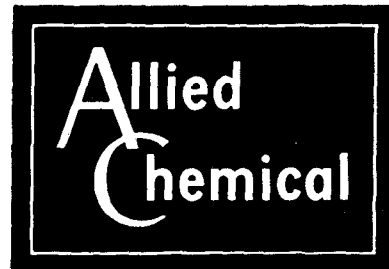
Chemically, coral is chiefly carbonate of lime. The flower animals extract the carbonate of lime from the sea water. With it, they have built the coral islands of the Pacific and the Great Barrier Reef of Australia—1,250 miles long.

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## Report on Washington

Perhaps the result would have been the same, but the incident was yet another demonstration of the shadow Byrd so long has cast across any progress in race relations. It was Byrd who first pronounced the doctrine of massive resistance to the Supreme Court's edict on public school desegregation, only to see the bars begin to go down in Virginia itself a year or so later.

The tragedy of Byrd's unbending attitude springs from the fact that the Old Dominion still is looked upon to set the tone for all but the racist Klan elements and other extremists among the South's white leadership. After Byrd's massive resistance pronouncement came Fausb and Little Rock, for which many hold Byrd at least partially responsible.

### The right to vote

The key provision of the 1960 act empowers federal judges to name federal voting referees to help qualified Negroes to vote whenever the U.S. Attorney General makes a case in federal court that there exists a pattern of voting discrimination. The Civil Rights Commission created by the 1957 civil rights act found that only about a quarter of the nearly five million Negroes of voting age were registered, compared with about 60 per cent of the voting-age Southern whites registered. But even this is misleading, as the commission has pointed out, for in those counties with the highest percentage of Negroes, the pressures against registration and voting are the strongest and most effective.

For example, in the six states with official racial registration statistics — Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Virginia — Negroes constituted a majority of the population in 97 counties. Of these counties, 75 had less than the state's average proportion of Negroes registered. In many instances, as commission hearings brought out, the registrars simply refused on one pretext or another to register Negroes, as in the flagrant case involv-

ing faculty members at Alabama's Tuskegee Institute.

Under the 1960 act, Negroes — or disenfranchised poor whites, as well — would be permitted to register by the federal court on showing that they are qualified under state law and that they had been denied the opportunity to register by county or municipal officials.

### More than good intentions

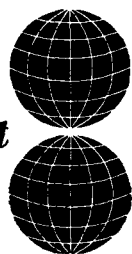
Here, and probably elsewhere in the bill, are provisions which the Southern opponents of Negro voting doubtless will seize upon for further delay. As in the case of the 1957 act, the usefulness of the 1960 act, as distinguished from its laudable purpose, will hinge on courageous administration, first by the Attorney General's office in Washington and second by the various federal judges throughout the South.

In this respect, very little is likely to happen in this election year to increase Negro voting, and what occurs in subsequent years will depend on the tone set by the next President and by the attitude and skill of his Attorney General.

Beyond the admirable purpose of the new act and the obvious difficulties in its immediate application, two points are important: first, the act is evidence that the Congress is aware that in a world in which the white man is in the minority and the nonwhite is a special target of Communist appeals, the United States must improve its internal race relations; second, that to do so requires federal action both in the legislative and administrative fields.

It is probable that each succeeding Congress will pass a new civil rights act, in part to close the loopholes as they are discovered by the resisters in the South and elsewhere. The power of the South in Congress, especially in the Senate, where the minority so long prevailed, has been badly dented, though not broken. The tide of progress demands change, and changes are being made. The civil rights act of 1960 must be viewed as only one step in what will be a long process designed to make those changes, and to do so before conditions become so intolerable that a reasoned approach becomes impossible.





**S**HORTLY after the violent race riots in South Africa, the Minister for Foreign Affairs announced at a press conference: "South Africa is rapidly returning to normal." This was a surprising statement to read, considering that most areas of the country were still being governed under a state of emergency, that some hundreds of political prisoners of all races were being held incommunicado in jail, that the entire police force and half of the territorial army units of the country were still under arms, that the Security Council of the United Nations had formally condemned South Africa's racial policies, and that the Prime Minister of the country was seriously ill in the hospital with two bullet wounds in his head.

It is difficult to say what the motives of the Prime Minister's assailant were and what the consequences of his deed will ultimately be. When Dr. Verwoerd resumes his duties, it will be over a country that will never again be what it was before the paroxysms of March and April.

After the weeks of confusion, the government reasserted its authority in a most unmistakable manner, and with the powers given to it under the state of emergency, was able to check the violence for the immediate present. The South African government has ardent supporters who can be numbered in the millions, and its opponents are largely innocent of the methods of effective political organization, let alone political subversion.

But even so, it is altogether impossible to believe in the permanence of the peace which the government managed to impose by force on that part of the population which remains as hostile to the authorities as ever. What has happened in South Africa is not an end but a beginning, and it is difficult to tell now where the solution will lie.

The essential facts of the situation in South Africa are not easy to recapitulate, but any attempt at recapitulation must commence with the statement of some bald figures. There are in South Africa today about three million whites, about twelve million blacks, and more than a million

people of mixed descent, called Cape coloreds. There are in addition about half a million Indians.

#### **Division among the whites**

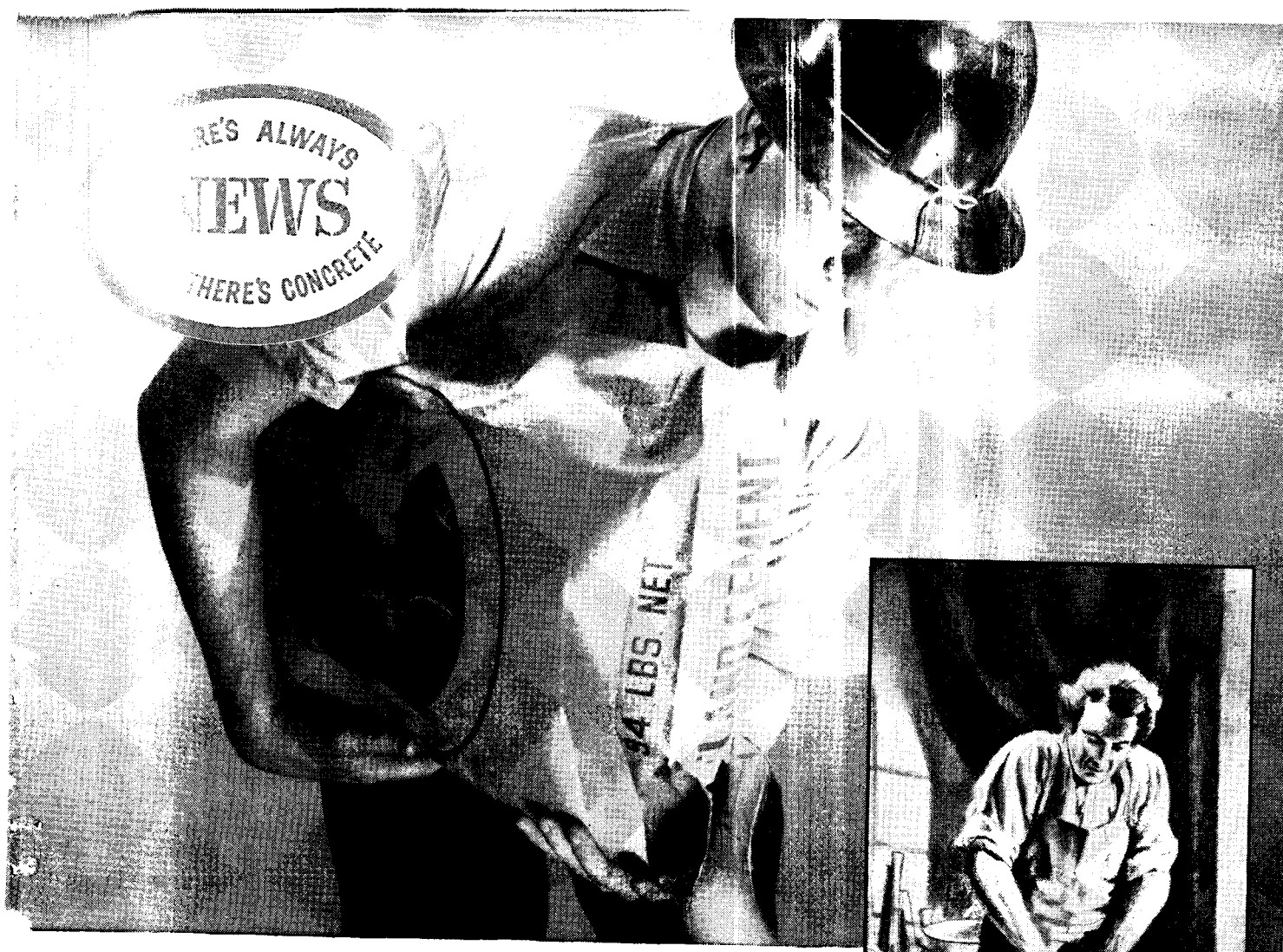
The white population is divided into two groups: the English-speaking group, which comprises about 40 per cent of the whites; and the Afrikaners, or Boers, who are the descendants of the original Dutch settlers of the Cape. The Afrikaans language can be described most simply as a dialect of Dutch; and the Afrikaners first came prominently into world history when their two republics, in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, were defeated by the British in the Anglo-Boer War at the beginning of this century. In spite of that defeat, it is the Afrikaners who now wield total political power in South Africa, though the power of mining, industry, and finance is still largely in the hands of the English-speaking group.

The division between these two communities of whites is intense and bitter, but it is overshadowed by the far deeper and more tragic division between black and white. It must be emphasized, incidentally, that neither the English nor the Afrikaners are new arrivals: they are overwhelmingly South African by birth and descent. The history of white settlement in South Africa dates back almost as far as the settlement by Europeans of the Eastern seaboard of North America.

#### **The growing power of the blacks**

The blacks are a people whose condition ranges from primitively tribal to urbanized professional. In general, it is still true that most Africans in the Union of South Africa are illiterate, divided among themselves, and deeply confused by their own sudden emergence into a highly industrialized and competitive society. It was only some seventy or eighty years ago that the gold and diamond mines first began to call upon the labor of large numbers of Africans, and it was barely twenty years ago that it was realized how rich a manufacturing country South Africa could become.

But it is also true that the Africans are, with astonishing speed, becoming better educated,



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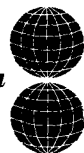
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## Report on South Africa



less confused, and more aware of their own powers and possibilities. And they are doing this despite the fact that their absorption in an industrial society has been managed under the worst social conditions imaginable, as the hideous slum locations around every South African city testify. To be fair, it must be added that the per capita income of the Africans in South Africa is the highest in the entire continent; but it is precisely because the Africans in South Africa have the little they have that they are so bitterly aware of all they do not have, politically and materially.

Regarding the shooting down by the South African police of the crowds who gathered in front of the police station at Sharpeville — and it was this event, above all others, which plunged the country into its crisis — there are two things which must be said. The first is that what happened at Sharpeville was not by any means an unprecedented occurrence in South Africa; the second is that, on this occasion, the uprising had an unprecedented and desirable consequence for Africans all over the country.

### The battle of the passes

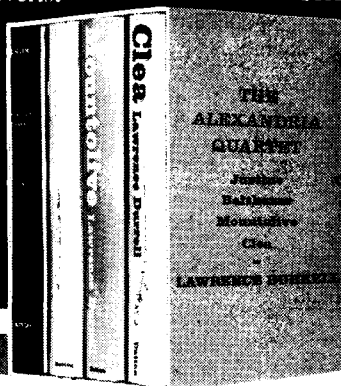
Hitherto, the only results produced by campaigns of civil disobedience on the part of the Africans have been the application of yet harsher measures by the government. Such measures have been introduced this time too, more far-reaching than any previous ones. But it must not be forgotten that the present troubles arose directly from an anti-pass campaign launched by the Pan-Africanist Congress, and at the height of the campaign the commissioner of police announced that "until further notice" Africans would not have to carry with them their reference books or passes.

This suspension of the pass laws was merely temporary, and they have been reimposed; yet even this temporary suspension was seen by the Africans as an acknowledgment of their own power. And it should



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## Report on South Africa



be noted that in the future the laws are to be applied with greater administrative leniency than ever before.

### Government double talk

Why, it may be asked, should the pass laws have aroused the Africans to so high a pitch of bitterness and excitement? To answer that question is to plunge into the very center of the government's policies of racial separation, or apartheid. Apartheid has, with good reason, become a word of vilification and abuse in every country of the world outside South Africa; but what people outside do not realize is that, however offensive it may be to liberal sentiment to have people of different racial groups who live in the same country forcibly separated from one another, apartheid never can really take place in South Africa.

South Africa is the most modern, most highly industrialized, and wealthiest country in Africa, and its modernity, its industry, and its wealth all depend upon the labor of the blacks in the cities and towns and farms of South Africa. The government of South Africa is as anxious as any government anywhere else in the world to have its country increase in wealth, productivity, and power, and for this reason it never has had and never will have the intention of separating from white South Africa the black workers, out of whose toil the wealth of the country comes.

The members of the government talk of separate but equal development in South Africa, of establishing national homes for the Africans, but this is nothing but the most nonsensical double talk. In its complete divorce from any observable or possible facts, the talk of total separation reveals a dreary imperviousness to reality.

Here is a recent example of the way in which the South African government goes about its supposed policy of separation. In the last budget, the total sum voted for the development of the African national

homes of the future was half a million pounds. At the same time, the sum of three million pounds was voted for one small aspect of the absorption of the Africans into the white-owned industries of the Union — the building of railways between each of the industrial centers and their neighboring African locations. So the talk goes one way and the deeds go another, and in the meantime the Africans stream into the towns and cities in search of better pay and the excitements of city life.

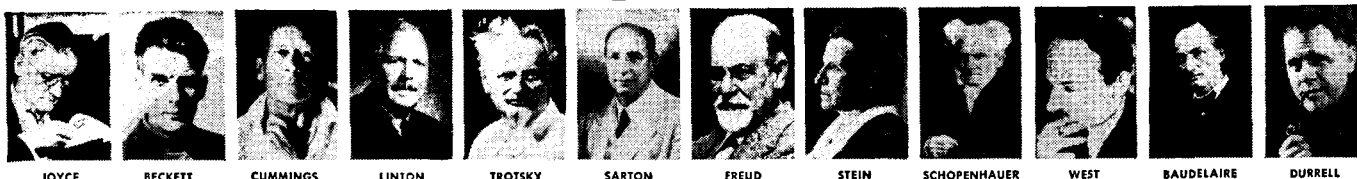
### New obstacles to freedom

In practice, apartheid has meant to the Africans nothing but repression and servitude, because the government separates only in an area where it can separate without affecting in any way the wealth and comfort of the white inhabitants of the country. African rights in South Africa have always been pitifully few, but even those few rights of self-expression and consultation which the Africans did have have been taken away from them.

Out of a legislature consisting of about 160 white members, the Africans were entitled to elect three white representatives to plead their case; this right has been abolished. Two universities in the country used to admit black and white students on terms of equality; they are no longer permitted to do so. And at the primary and high school levels, all government-supported schools for Africans have been forced to follow a syllabus which has the explicit intention of teaching the Africans only what the government thinks will be useful to them in the place the government has put them.

Africans could hold property in freehold in certain areas; they can no longer do so. A whole series of acts with such resounding titles as the Suppression of Communism Act, the Public Safety Act, the Industrial Conciliation Act, and others have given the government the power to deport African political leaders to remote areas of the country, to smash African trade unions, and to break up African political movements; and these powers have been used copiously. What is true of the Africans is true also of the colored and Indian communities, who had until now occupied an intermediate position between white and black.

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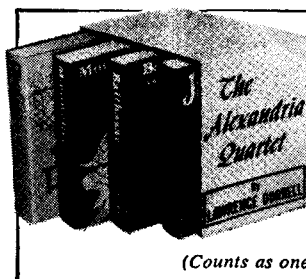
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## Report on South Africa

In addition to these new deprivations and penalties, the disabilities which the Africans had previously suffered from have been given a finer definition, a harsher edge, by the government. Social segregation has always been taken for granted in South Africa by all but a minority of self-conscious liberals among the whites and articulate professional and political leaders among the blacks. But now, under the terms of such acts as the Immorality Act and the Provision of Separate Facilities Act, this social segregation has become official policy, zealously pursued, enforced with incredible punitiveness.

Above all, in discussing this type of long-standing grievance, a place of importance must be given to the recent developments of the systems of influx control and registration, which seek to control the movements of Africans from one part of the country to another, or even from one part of a single magisterial district to another part of that same district.

The pass laws are of a complexity which would require a lawyer to unravel: but any policeman knew that unless an African could produce his reference book, containing, in addition to his tax receipts, a whole series of official entries giving him permission to live where he happens to live and to work where he happens to work, he could be arrested on the spot. In any year, hundreds of thousands of Africans are arrested for pass offenses alone.

The complexity and severity of the laws have not only produced general confusion and suffering, but they have also become symbolical to the Africans of their helot status. To the Africans, the intention of the pass laws is to make it forever plain to each of them that his place on earth is not his by right but by permission. And "forever" here is not a rhetorical flourish; Dr. Verwoerd, the Prime Minister, has continually and grandiosely talked in terms of centuries.

The outlook for South Africa is an extremely grim one. If there is any hope at all, it lies in the fact that the government has applied its apartheid measures only in ways which have not affected the wealth and comfort of the white inhabitants of the country. But the wealth and comfort of the whites are now being affected, very deeply, by the ruinous policies which the government is pursuing.

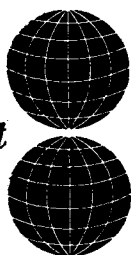
The towns around Sharpeville, where the most severe rioting took place, were like ghost towns for days because so few Africans turned up for work. Ships stood idle outside Cape Town harbor, unable to unload because the dockworkers from Cape Town's locations were on strike. A day of mourning for the dead of Sharpeville took the form of a call for a country-wide stay-at-home strike. The response to the call was vigorous, in spite of the hastiness with which it was called and the difficulties which faced any African leader who tried to move among his people. The Africans are back at work now, driven back by their own poverty, lack of organization, and the punitive measures of the government. But they will stay away again later, they will riot again later, unless the government is able to move and change swiftly and still maintain its supporters.

### While white men sleep

Do the white people of South Africa value sufficiently their own lives and livelihoods to make this change? It is difficult to say. There does seem to be a fluidity about white attitudes which has never before been manifest, but little can be expected from those who are at present in power. They are people who dreamed of domination and authority, and though the dream has turned into a nightmare, and though they are now aware that it is a nightmare, they cling to it, more frightened of the common daylight than they are of the horrors they have themselves evoked.

If these leaders waken at all, it will be suddenly; but it may well be that nothing, not even the voice of their own simplest material ambitions, will ever rouse them from their tormented sleep. It is not only the blacks in South Africa whom the world should pity.

# *The Atlantic Report* LONDON



**L**ONDON is being methodically rebuilt to a massive master plan, the first stage of which is to be completed this summer, the second stage in 1975, and the final stage in 2005. Nothing so comprehensive has been attempted since the great fire of 1666, when the inspired London of Christopher Wren was born.

The Londoner himself, traveling his well-worn line from home to office and home again, knows less of it than the visitor. There is the 351-foot Shell Oil tower, which is mounting cacophonously day by day to dominate the Thames's south bank. Across the river at Millbank, behind Big Ben, rises the beginning of the 387-foot Vickers block, the first London building taller than St. Paul's. But one really needs to explore beyond, from Peckham Rye to the Seven Sisters Road, to glimpse the scope of the great plan that rolls on toward the next century.

This plan was initiated by Lord Reith in 1941, and it still visibly bears the stamp of this purposeful Scot who earlier developed the earnest, non-commercial, and sometimes brilliant British Broadcasting Corporation. The architect of the New London Plan was the eminent professor, Sir Patrick Abercrombie. The plan is under the supervision of the London County Council, administrator of the 117 square miles of the County of London. The L.C.C. has been socialist-controlled for twenty-five years and is experienced in planning.

Its first aim is to stop London's family from growing. The second is to move tens of thousands in overpopulated fringe areas out of the town altogether. The third is to bring into the center a quite new resident population. The fourth is to build a final city of interconnected twentieth-century country towns, in brick and concrete, each complete in itself and set in parkland.

## **New space for living**

At night now, the city abruptly empties and is left to visitors and janitors. The plan is to change it back to what it was, a home as well as a hotel

and a workshop. The first step toward this goal is the erection of the Barbican, a community for 50,000 on a site now being prepared out of the rubble of tumble-down warehouses in the original City. The Barbican is to be a city within the City, with traffic-free squares and terraces laid out between triangular tower apartments, its own stores, schools, art center, swimming pool, roof gardens, hotels, and restaurants. Homes for another 5000 new Londoners are to be built nearby at Finsbury. In the West End, the first new private-enterprise apartment block is going up in the Charing Cross Road.

The L.C.C. meanwhile is trying hard to control the flood tide of office building. Since 1955, all applications to turn theaters into offices have been refused. Seventy large firms have been persuaded to move their main offices out of central London. Almost all industry, except immovable heavy industries along the banks of London's river, is to be served with notices to vacate. The L.C.C. is spending \$1.5 million a year to buy out those industries that own the land they stand on. The small workshops which are traditional, as in the East End, are to be housed tier on tier in tall buildings.

To gain more space for living, 20,000 Londoners are being moved out of town each year. There are 150,000 cockneys on new estates in the suburbs, 50,000 in new satellite towns, and 30,000 settled already in existing country towns.

The three million who are to stay in the county will live more spaciouly in 300 "neighborhoods," neat apartment villages lying off the main roads and linked in groups of five to sixty "communities." Each community is to have its own senior high schools, big stores, art and technical colleges, and town halls. The aim is to provide at least four acres of park and playground per thousand people and to strive for seven acres.

A good place to get the feel of the London that is planned for 2005 is a hill in Richmond Park. From there the powerful rectangles of the regular white towers of Roehampton stand guard at inter-



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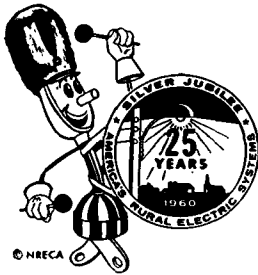
REA loans, which have enabled groups of rural people to build their own electric power lines, have paid off in many ways. Already, America has pocketed benefits that far outweigh the dollars loaned to build consumer-owned rural electric systems.

We all live better today because farmers, with the help of electricity, have tripled their output per hour of labor in the last 25 years. When the Rural Electrification Administration was created in 1935, each farm worker was producing for 10 people. Today, with fewer farmers, he's supplying food and fiber for 25. And with our exploding population, he's expected to feed 50 people by 1975!

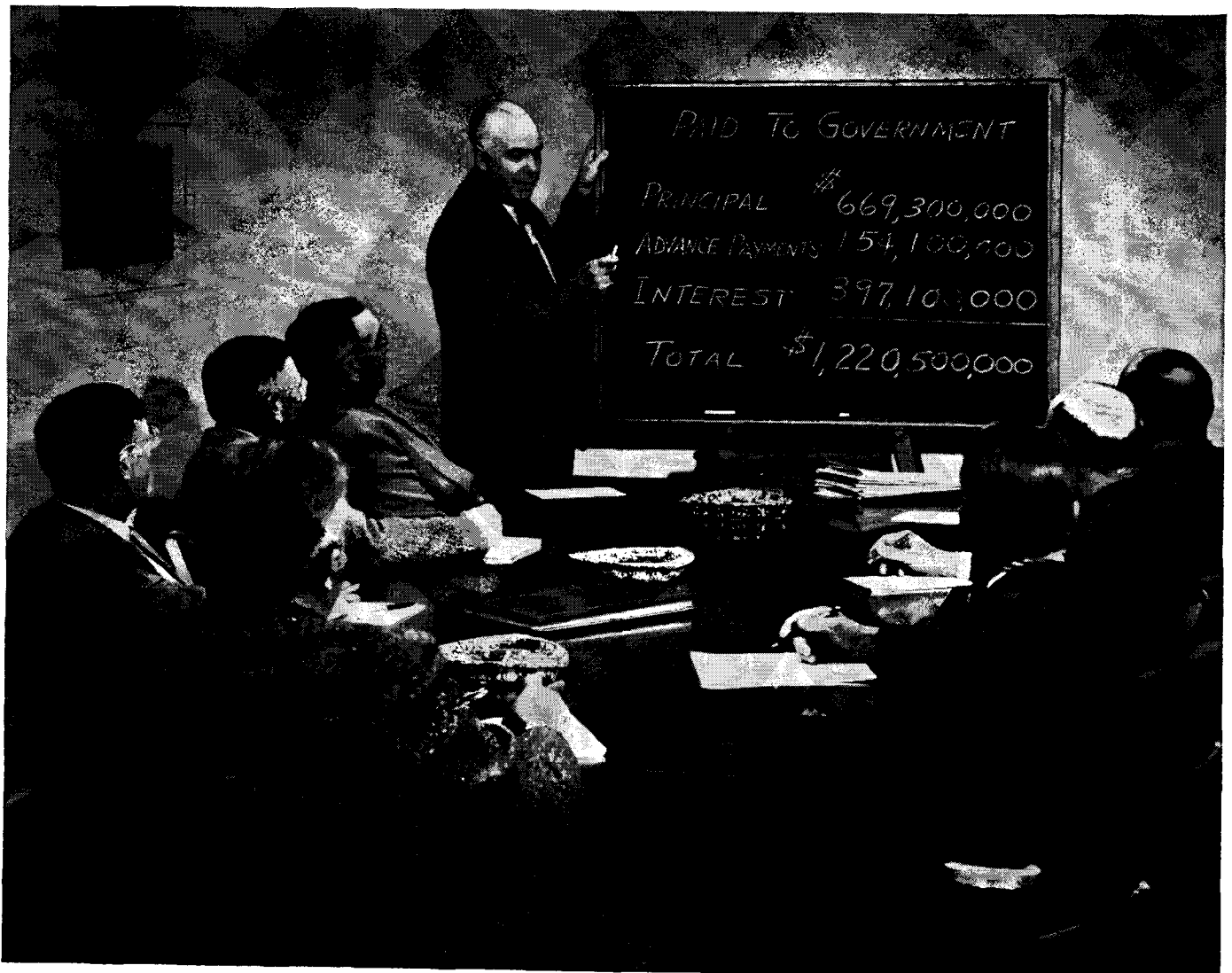
Decentralization of industry, so vital to our defense, and country living for millions of city workers have been encouraged by electric lines stretching far beyond city limits. And rural electrification has opened a brand new market for electric appliances and equipment. This year alone, 4,500,000 families, farms, and businesses in rural areas will spend more than \$1 billion for things electrical.

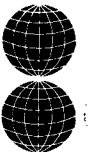
Best of all, the cost of rural electrification is borne by the people who use it. Already, 1,000 locally-owned and managed rural electric systems have paid more than \$1 billion in principal and interest on their \$3½ billion REA loans.

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### AMERICA'S RURAL ELECTRIC SYSTEMS





## Report on London

vals over a low, crowded, higgledy-piggledy London, the town of the past. The effect of discipline is softened by grass and trees, and the view has beauty.

### The traffic problem

The great plan, as it stands now, faces one unforeseen enemy — the automobile. "Building more roads to be filled with more cars is not the solution, as the Americans have found." Armed with this conviction and charged by law "to preserve the best of existing London and respect its structure," as well as build anew, the L.C.C. fights a rear-guard action to keep its New London Plan intact. But without more roads, and perhaps even without a quite differently conceived city, how can the equation be solved? Hundreds of thousands of newly made commuters, moved by the L.C.C. itself from the fringes to suburbs and satellites, plus tens of thousands of new residents attracted into the very center, with their cars — what is the answer?

Into this controversy has been thrust a new political figure — Ernest Marples, eager, effervescent, efficient, and eccentric, and a self-made man. He is a grammar school boy. He is dedicated to making good: a champion ballroom dancer and rock climber, a student of wines, an owner of vineyards in the Beaujolais district of France, a *cordon bleu* chef, and a strict dietician who often fasts for two weeks.

But above all, Mr. Marples is a construction man. He has, by British political custom, disposed of his holdings in Marples, Ridgeway Limited, now that he is Minister of Transport. His name, however, stays on the bulldozers and giant shovels at Hammersmith Broadway, where London's second overpass is being built on the road to London Airport, reminding every sidewalk superintendent that Mr. Marples knows this part of his business.

Mr. Marples' first act has been to frame a bill making himself virtual traffic dictator of London. His au-

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vell, good Lord, what have I done?"

What feed of yours is selling too well to suit Mr. Hall." E. C. Hall was one of the bank's largest stockholders, and he owned a wholesale grocery in town. I hadn't stopped to think that our sale of feed would cut into his business, but they undoubtedly had.

What does Mr. Hall want me to do?"

He doesn't want you to do anything. He wants me to fire you," he and snapped.

I hesitated a moment, but before I could ask the question, he and said, "I told him that you were doing what you were hired to do. I told him he could buy my stock or I would buy his, but I wasn't going to fire you for doing something that needed doing."

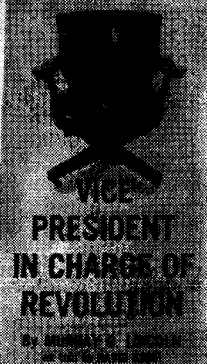
I accepted Mr. Holland's reassurance gratefully but still felt uneasy. Why was it that whenever I turned around I stepped on someone's toes? I sensed that this was but the beginning of my latest trouble. Now that there was opposition to me so close to home—in the bank itself—I had the feeling that I would be stopped just as I had been down in New London.

As always when I was troubled, I thought of old Pop Hart and I went up to see him again the next morning. "My goodness, I'm going to run into this sort of thing all the time? Have I got this to look forward to all of my life?"

Pop looked at me for a long moment. "Murray, just as long as you're doing something a little different from the way in which it's always been done you're going to find some sort of opposition. The best evidence you are doing something worth while is this kind of opposition. Now, you can go ahead doing something and getting into this kind of trouble or you can stop and just coast. But I don't think you're the kind that will stop. If that's your nature, then reconcile yourself to it. Don't get discouraged. This is the sort of competition that goes on all the time, and you've got to learn to handle it."

While Pop Hart's words made good sense and gave me courage, I don't think I could have gone on very long without the support of C. P.

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## Report on London

thority supersedes the established powers hitherto exercised by the L.C.C., the twenty-eight boroughs of the county, and almost eighty other local authorities and committees in the Greater London that reaches out beyond the county boundary.

With this authority Mr. Marples plans to tear up traffic islands in the middle of bridges and main roads, introduce a free flow of traffic at rush hours, mark plainly in white paint where motorists can park in London and where they cannot, recruit traffic wardens to free Scotland Yard from the tedious duties that now take up more than half its policemen's time, scatter the town with parking meters, and put car parks underneath the trees and lawns of Hyde Park. He is in constant touch with Baltimore, which he considers provides America's finest example of traffic engineering, to keep this five-year plan up to date. He is working on a ten-year plan to follow. And he has set up a long-term study group to "produce a Design for Living at the turn of the century."

The car seems likely to bring even more profound changes to Britain. For it provides a special challenge to an island so crowded, so settled, and so old. Already there is an automobile for every one and a half yards of main road; there are forty-five cars to every mile of road, lane, and byway. By 1975, the year of the end of stage two of the New London Plan, there will, at the present rate, be just eighteen inches of main traffic highway to each car.

### The auto industry

Many economists, as well as many planners, are beginning to warn that the automobile industry is expanding too fast. It was a shock to some of them when the budget produced no extra tax to slow the industry down, even though a new car already bears a 50 per cent sales tax. But demand is still so urgent in spite of the tax that the British industry plans to increase output by 70 per cent in three years to meet it. By 1962 pro-

duction will probably be three million vehicles, three times as many as 1952.

The practical answer the critics get is that to slow down automobile investment deliberately would stop the whole economy. The automobile is Britain's basic industry now. This simple fact is most important to the people who live in areas of what is euphemistically called these days "underemployment." They want a share of the car industry. And they have now been promised it.

To fulfill the promise, the Conservative Government has used powers both of persuasion and direct control. It is sending the new car factories to Scotland, Liverpool, and South Wales, where unemployment is double or triple the national average, by the force of building permits and the lure of loans. The British Motor Corporation, for instance, is somewhat reluctantly planning plants in all three areas instead of Birmingham and is being helped along in one with a £9 million loan. This action, surprising to many Government supporters, may offer a key to an understanding of the puzzle of third-term Conservatism.

### The economy on a knife's edge

Macmillan's Government is acting liberally but paternally, with one hand in its pocket and the other on the shoulder of industry. Although it is avoiding nationalization, it is taking a considerable financial interest in the steel industry. It has by main force reorganized, and will subsidize, the aircraft industry. It is going to pay for the railways (an immediate \$90 million loss was accepted in this year's budget) while "seeking ways of putting them on a business footing." It is improving the welfare state. All these efforts have rudely shaken the Tory Party, producing within its ranks the same sort of split on matters of political principle that has plagued the Labor Party in recent years.

Instead of reducing expenditure, as was planned and promised at election time, the Tory Government this year is increasing it by nearly one billion dollars. The 1960 budget implies that taxes can never, in the foreseeable future, go much lower. The average \$7000-a-year man pays 36 per cent of his income in taxes.

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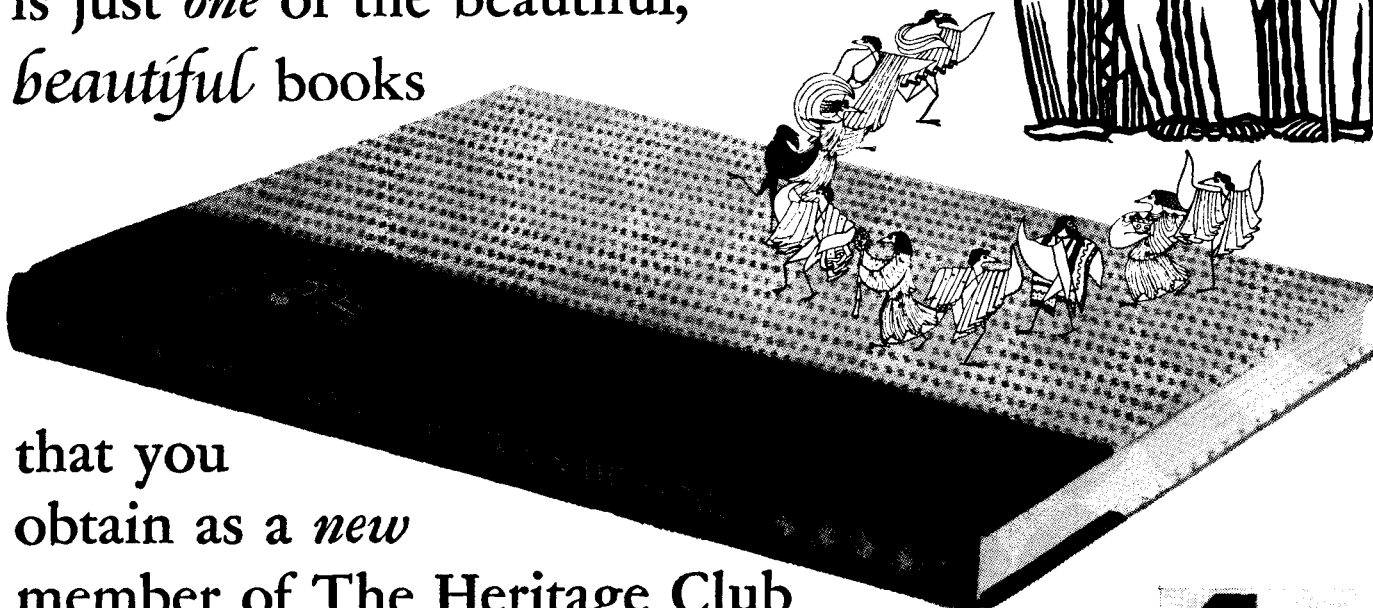
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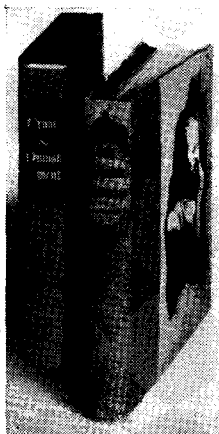
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## Report on London



This means that with wages and government spending rising, but with exports going a little slowly, the economy is again balancing on the knife's edge. A very slight movement could precipitate either a balance-of-payments crisis, or another squeeze on money and credit, or both. One side of the knife is stamped "British Commonwealth," and the other "Common Market."

### The Common Market dilemma

A deflationary policy would at once react against Commonwealth countries. It would probably cause another fall in the prices of their goods. Exclusion of Britain from the Common Market, the slight early effects of which could easily be withstood were the economy firmly placed, might even, by slowing down the rise of exports, bring on a payments crisis that could lead to that deflationary policy.

This would suggest that Britain should go into the Common Market. But Britain allows tariff-free entry in its home market to the manufactures of the underdeveloped countries of the Commonwealth. In this way it is an example to the world. Full membership in the Common Market, therefore, would force Britain to wipe out this concession, an almost unthinkable step in present circumstances. So Britain must stay out.

Meanwhile, a second force, the automobile industry, drags Britain nearer and nearer to the Common Market willy-nilly. On the Continent there is the fastest growing car market in the world. It is three times the size of Britain's and is twice as far away from saturation. A tariff barrier to keep British-built cars out of the Common Market could be a serious blow. The British industry would probably have to set up factories on the Continent. Some of the investment that brings promise to Scotland, Wales, and Liverpool would then go instead to Germany or Italy or France. It is a cruel choice. But it has to be faced this year.

When the moment is magic...  
the champagne is

# COOK'S

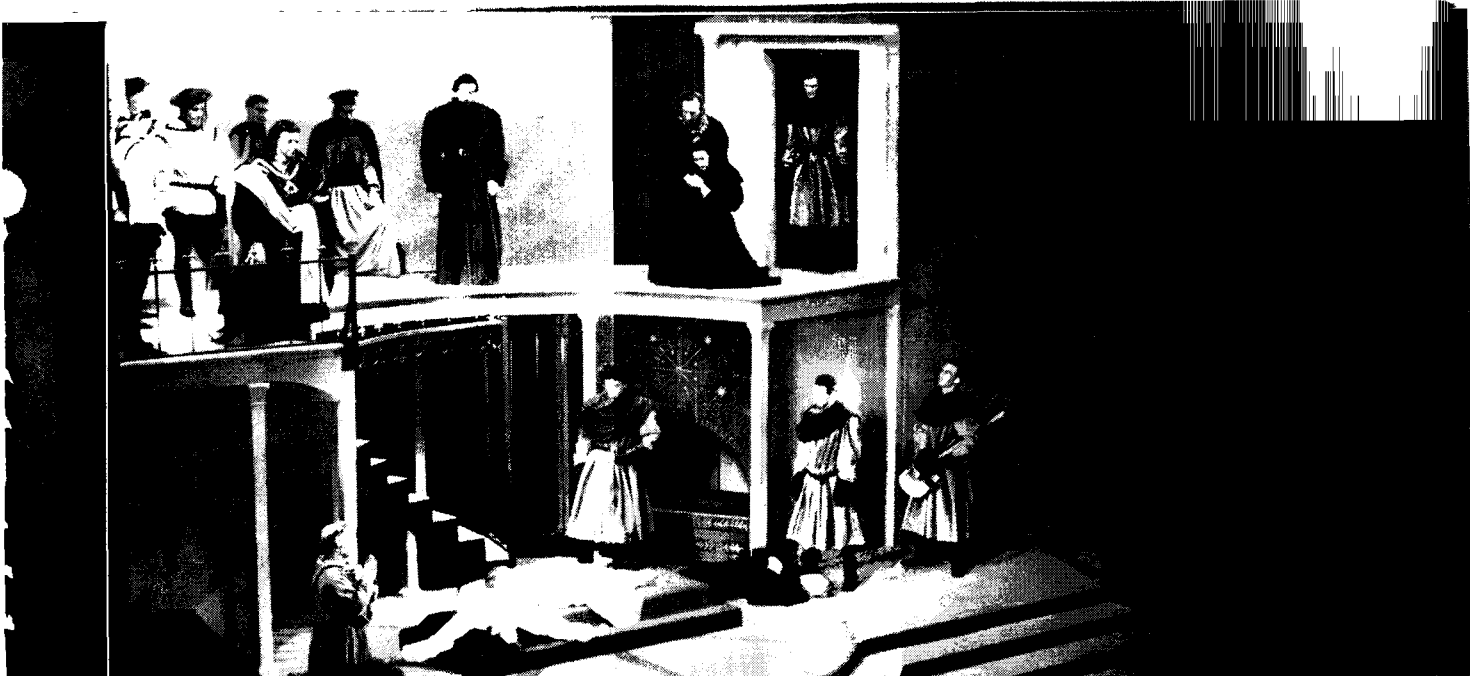


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Scene from "Romeo and Juliet"—at Stratford-upon-Avon

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It tells you which towns have theatres; which have opera and ballet; which have festivals; how much you can expect to pay for tickets and so forth.

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Did you know that London has nearly twice as many first-rate theatres as New York? That the best seat at the Old Vic can be booked for \$2.38? That the cheapest seat goes for 42 cents?

And, if you look at our 'Travelers' Guide' (which we also send you free) you will see that the tab for a good pre-theatre dinner is refreshingly low, too.

### What is a whisky seat?

The British make theatre-going wonderfully civilized. In the intermission, they bring you light refreshments on a tray. Or you can go to the theatre bar for a nip. The seats at the end of a row are called "whisky seats": guess why.

As for getting tickets, there is seldom any problem. You can even make reservations for most London shows on the same day. But if you want seats at the great festivals (such as Edinburgh and Stratford) you should ask your travel agent to book in advance.

Your Theatre Guide gives you cap-

sule descriptions of every major festival—and also covers opera, ballet and music. Concert-lovers get palpitations when they find that London has five permanent symphony orchestras!

### What goes on outside London?

At least three dozen cities have front-rank repertory companies. Many an illustrious name has appeared on their programs—Olivier, Gielgud and Alec Guinness to mention just three.

Then there are two other kinds of British theatre that are slightly crazy. The Christmas pantomime and the seaside concert party.

### Ever seen a pantomime?

Christmas pantomimes are musicals—usually based on children's stories such as "Cinderella." A stunning girl al-

ways plays the male lead—and the ugly sisters are invariably men. Doesn't make sense. But it's not intended to. The season begins in early December and runs through February.

Spring, Summer and early Fall are the seasons for seaside concert parties. They are miniature revues—usually staged on the pier. Entertainment is inconsequential but fun.

Stanley Holloway began his career in a concert party. And is proud of it.

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# Atlantic Repartee

## LETTERS TO AND FROM THE EDITOR

### Compulsive suburbia

SIR:

In his article "Compulsive Suburbia" in the April *Atlantic*, John Keats did not dwell on the tremendous influence of the PTA in suburbia and on the thinking of suburbians. Mrs. O'Brien, mother of eight, was sitting in her obstetrician's waiting room quietly weeping. The medico came out of his examining room and was taken aback. "Mrs. O'Brien," he said sternly, "I can't understand your sadness and tears. You're healthy; you've had eight children without any trouble. What can be wrong?" Mrs. O'Brien dried her tears. "It isn't that at all, doctor," she said. "But I just break up and go all to pieces when I think to myself—nine more years of the damned PTA!"

EDWARD A. CONNELL  
Stamford, Conn.

SIR:

It is my belief that John Keats's suburban cocktail party has a kissing cousin in urbia. Compulsive conformity, senseless verbiage, prejudice, disinterest, and moral irresponsibility thrive in steel canyons as well as in stucco cottages.

MIMI HARRIS  
Los Angeles, Calif.

SIR:

Mr. Keats, how right you are! We're empty, we women of today, with our frozen foods and box cakes. We can't even nurse our babies any more. The skills that once were our birthright as women are going, going, gone. Without the supermarkets we'd starve. We're so busy raising flowers and clipping hedges

we've forgotten how to raise a vegetable, and most of us couldn't can them even if we did grow them.

NAN CAMERON  
Vienna, Va.

SIR:

What makes Mr. Keats think that the conformity of the Baxters is any different from the conformity of their parents a generation ago in the suburbs of Jamaica, Bay Ridge, or Mt. Vernon? Or of their grandparents in Hoboken or Manhattan? There are rows of brownstones, all the same; blocks of attached frame houses in Queens; and Baltimore is a whole city of look-alike houses built by other generations. The tenements of big cities are certainly warrenlike.

JOYCE S. INSOLIA  
Long Island, N. Y.

SIR:

The suburbanite who lives on credit excessively is immoral, as Mr. Keats says, but deadbeats are also the business of city collection agencies. Creditors will assure anyone that there are as many people in the city who don't pay their bills as in suburbia. The debtor may stay put, at least, in suburbia.

JOY HALFTER  
Elmhurst, Ill.

SIR:

John Keats should have shown how the prevalence of deficit living does not end with suburbia but has now become so firmly entrenched among our working public, and our government, that it can be considered a national characteristic.

We have a new kind of serfdom

emerging, twentieth-century style, in which the villein willingly binds himself to his environment through lifelong mortgage and debt. A more successful system has never been devised.

FRED ETZELT  
Delray Beach, Fla.

SIR:

Home ownership made possible by suburban living is the most unifying force in family life. Local community activity is far more creative than that in the urban world of apartments and movies.

VICTOR C. HARNISH  
Waltham, Mass.

SIR:

Anyone who has seen the gray faces of city dwellers getting off the rush-hour subway trains or buses shouldn't begrudge the extra time the commuter takes on his train or in his car.

MRS. GEORGE C. KIRKER  
Whittier, Calif.

SIR:

The so-called herd followers would be herd followers no matter where they were, and I for one feel that the individual can stand by himself in a look-alike house in a look-alike community.

ROSEMARY DEMETRIOU  
Lima, Ohio

"I, personally . . ."

SIR:

Ray Moseley's article "Detroit's Welfare Empire" (April *Atlantic*) points to some of the symptoms of the social turmoil of this age. The economics are burdensome; the hu-

man misery and deprivation are shocking; and worse, Mr. Moseley's article seems to suggest no remedy.

My suggestion is that some city experiment with a very carefully planned and executed program of family health, education, and welfare services under one central authority.

The alternative to successful remedies is most unpleasant to contemplate. Would it possibly be progressive and engulfing decay? If so, it would be too bad, for the very victims of these social ills usually appear to have a basis for and longing for improvement of their constructive productivity. I found such potential during a visit to the emergency service of Detroit's Receiving Hospital on a Saturday night in 1956. The constant stream of deeply troubled humanity using that emergency service is duplicated in a large number of American cities. Many of these people come from groups described by Mr. Moseley. Maybe they should have a sporting chance at life for the sake of all of us.

RAYMOND S. DUFF, M.D.  
New Haven, Conn.

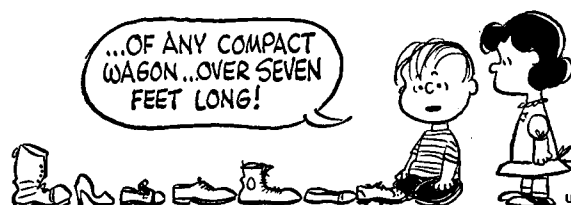
SIR:

I read with great interest your report on Bonn in the March *Atlantic*, but feel that one of its chief conclusions is misleading; namely, that 'persisting internal and external pressures must be faced as long as Germany remains divided.'

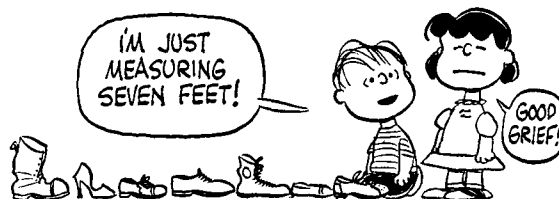
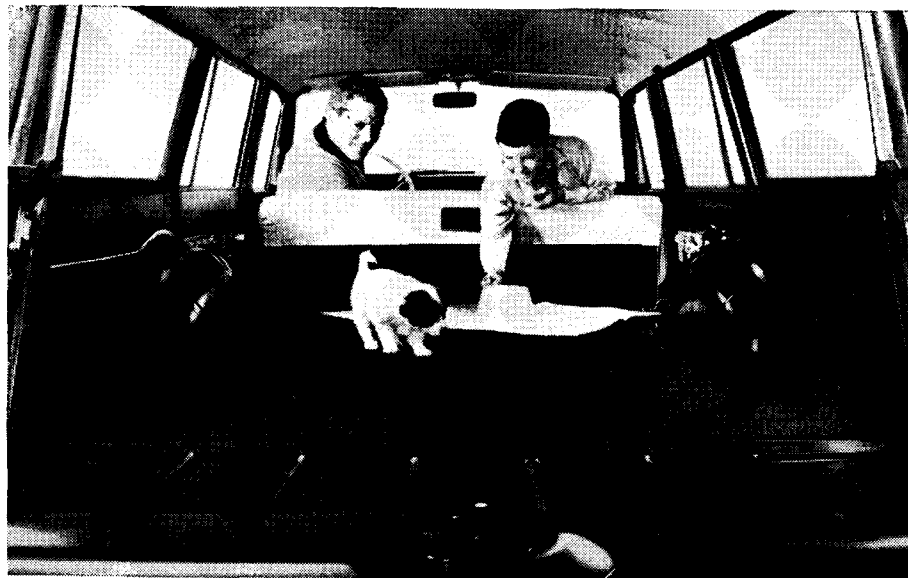
To expect that reunification would solve many of Germany's problems is to ignore the Germans' monumental capacity to feel sorry for themselves as a nation. Under Hitler, the motif was, "Our poor Germany, how can she solve her problems under the yoke of the Treaty of Versailles and without colonies?" Under the Kaiser, the motif was, "Our poor Germany, she arrived on the world scene too late to get any of the good colonies and had to make do with less rich areas." Before that, it was, "Our poor Germany, throughout history she has been divided into small states and has been powerless." So, right now we have, "Our poor Germany, if only she were reunified, what we couldn't do!"

It is something to think about before we commit ourselves completely to reunification in the belief that it will solve problems.

ILSE BARNHART  
Palo Alto, Calif.



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# CAN A MAN "OWN" A JOB HE HASN'T CREATED?

Once upon a time there were two men, Adam and Zeb.

Adam risked all his savings to set himself up as an independent neighborhood merchant.

Zeb took a factory job which required no risk from him.

Neighborhood competition finally caused Adam to go broke and give up his store. He was out of work and out of savings.

Circumstances eventually made Zeb's job unnecessary. He was out of work, but he had his savings. And his severance pay. And his unemployment compensation.

Nobody felt sorry for Adam. The neighborhood shoppers felt justified in patronizing the most efficient merchant. It was Adam's own responsibility if he couldn't keep up. Let him retrain himself and find another job.

Many people felt sorry for Zeb. They said the factory should let Zeb stand beside the new equipment and be paid even though he was not needed. By assumption, he owned the job which he had not created.

America was built by the Adams. Is it going to the Zeb's?

## REPUBLIC STEEL

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The constant search for better and better steels is one of the basic ways Republic Steel is trying to reduce costs and combat inflation.

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These vacuum-melted steels are proving to be stronger, more ductile, and of more uniform properties than those produced by more conventional methods.

Republic has the largest capacity for production of these steels in the industry, and continues a broad research program into their properties and potential military and civilian applications.

## SOVIET WRITERS AND AMERICAN READERS

BY THE EDITOR

THIS issue is the opening of a window on the present and lively arts of a talented people. In the selection and editing we have avoided as much as possible the didactic, of which there is a great deal in Soviet writing, in favor of that which is creative or factual, and therefore of more interest to American readers.

The editor must set his own rules for any such medley as this: I wished to present material by Russian writers which up till now has not been available to the American public; I wanted it to come from living writers (with the exception of Mayakovsky's poem, it is all contemporary); and I hoped to strike a fair balance between fiction and poetry on the one hand and reminiscence or matters of fact on the other. Half the content was written in response to my suggestions; the rest was chosen from recent Russian periodicals or books. The Soviet magazines are considerably larger than ours: *Novy Mir*, the leading literary monthly, comprises 288 pages without advertising and with close-packed type, and in these ampler dimensions the Russian contributors are encouraged to write at a much greater length than is customary with us. Thus, "Uncle Ivan's Tale," the episode we have chosen from Sholokhov's powerful new novel now being serialized in Moscow, is only a portion of one installment. And Samuil Marshak's account of his sunny and unforgettable meeting with Gorky is but a sampling, though a happy one, of a much longer memoir. Such abridgments were

necessary if we were to carry out our intention of publishing at least a score of Soviet authors.

The canons of socialist realism are foreign to our way of thinking, and Western writers are curious to know whether they have fettered Soviet talents. All art is the handmaiden of the state, and in literature the emphasis is on the positive hero and on patriotism and socialist achievement; sex is treated with puritanical restraint, and criticism is leveled at the stupidity or inefficiency of individuals — as in the comedy "The Battle of the Tractors" by Antonov — but never at the state. Yet no one can miss the power of physical attraction in Leonov's superb story, "The Easter Outing," and no Western critic can ignore the candid self-questioning of how high one dares aim in satire and comedy so clearly stated by Akimov, the director of the Leningrad Comedy Theater. American readers, as they judge for themselves, may find in this issue more freedom of thought, power of expression, and diversity of sympathy than they had expected. There is unquestionably a fixity of purpose in the Soviet writing of today, and with that fact one must admit this corollary: the people are hungry for books and information.

Six years ago no magazine here or in the Soviet Union could have published such a number. Does this not suggest that on both sides there has been a shortage in human understanding badly in need of correction, and that only by opening the window can we see?

# UNCLE IVAN'S TALE

BY MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV

*The most celebrated of Russian novelists, MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV made his reputation with his powerful classic AND QUIET FLOWS THE DON. The first volume of his second big novel, VIRGIN SOIL UPTURNED, dealing with collectivization among the Cossacks, appeared in 1932. The concluding volume, from which this present episode is taken, has only recently been completed. His books are published in America by Alfred A. Knopf.*

THE village of Gremyachy Log dropped out of sight behind a low rise, and the broad steppe, stretching farther than the eye could see, folded Davydov in its embrace. Breathing deeply of the heady scents of the grass and the moist black earth, Davydov gazed at the long line of ancient burial mounds in the distance. Those distant blue barrows reminded him in some way of the storm-roused waves of the Baltic, and unable to resist a sudden rush of melancholy, he sighed heavily and quickly averted his misty eyes. Then his absent gaze focused on a faint dot high up in the sky. Majestic in its solitude, a black steppe eagle, dweller of burial mounds, hovered in the cold heavens, slowly, barely perceptibly losing height as it circled earthward. Its broad, blunt-tipped wings, motionlessly outspread, bore it lightly in that lofty region just below the clouds, and the wind licking greedily around the powerful big-boned body smoothed its black, dully gleaming feathers. As it swept in broad turns toward the east, the sun's rays caught it from in front and below, and it seemed to Davydov that glittering white sparks flew from the whitish underside of the eagle's wings.

The steppe, the boundless, rolling steppe. Ancient barrows in a light-blue mist. A black eagle in the sky. The soft rustle of wind-blown grass. Davydov felt very small and lost in this huge expanse as he gazed wistfully over the tormentingly

endless plain. His love for Lushka, the grief of parting, the unrealized desire to see her now seemed trivial and unimportant. He was oppressed by a feeling of loneliness and isolation from the whole living world. Something like this he had experienced long ago, when he had stood watch at night in the bow of his ship. What a long time ago that had been! It seemed like an old, half-forgotten dream.

The warmth of the sun became more perceptible. The soft south wind freshened. Without noticing it, Davydov let his head droop and he dozed, swaying gently over the ruts and potholes in the neglected steppe-land road.

The horses he had procured were wretched animals; his driver, the old collective farmer Ivan Arzhanov, was taciturn and, in the general opinion of the hamlet, slightly daft. He kept the horses on a tight rein, and all the way to the field camp they moved at such a tediously slow pace that halfway there Davydov, waking from his doze, could not help asking grimly: "Do you think you're carrying pots to a fair, Uncle Ivan? Afraid of breaking them? Why do you keep the horses walking all the time?"

Arzhanov looked away and for a long time was silent. "I know what kind of 'pot' I'm carrying," he answered at last, in a squeaky voice. "You may be chairman of the farm, but you won't make me gallop without need."

*Woodcut by Kasiyan.*



"Who's asking you to gallop? But you might let them trot a bit going downhill. You're not carrying anything; the cart's as good as empty, that's certain."

After another long silence Arzhanov said unwillingly: "A horse itself knows when it should walk and when it should trot."

Davydov began to get really annoyed. No longer hiding his indignation, he exclaimed: "That's great! What have you got a pair of reins in your hands for? What are you sitting here for, wearing the seat out? Come on, give me the reins."

More willingly Arzhanov replied: "I've got reins in my hands to guide the horses with, so that they'll go where they ought to go and not where they ought not to. And if you don't like me sitting next to you, I can get down and walk along beside the cart on foot, but I won't give you the reins."

"Why won't you?" Davydov asked, vainly trying to see the stubbornly averted face of the driver.

"Would you give me your reins?"

"What reins?" Davydov asked, failing to understand.

"As if you didn't know. You've got the reins of the whole farm in your hands; the people have entrusted you to manage everything we've got. Would you let anyone else have those reins? Of course you wouldn't. 'I certainly won't,' you'd say. And I'm the same. I don't ask you for your reins, do I? So don't you ask for mine."

Davydov gave a snort of laughter. Not a trace of his recent anger remained.

"Well, suppose there was a fire in the village. Would you drive your barrel of water at the same shameful pace?" he asked, awaiting the reply with interest.

"They don't send people like me for water when there's a fire."

And at that moment, glancing sideways at Arzhanov, Davydov noticed for the first time, somewhere below the old man's peeling weather-beaten cheeks, the fine wrinkles of a carefully restrained smile.

"Who do you think they'd send, then?"

"People like you and Makar Nagulnov."

"Why's that?"

"You're the only two in the village who like to drive fast; you live at a gallop yourselves."

Davydov laughed heartily, slapping his knees and throwing back his head. Before he had recovered his breath, he asked: "So if a fire really breaks out in the village, there'll be only Makar and me to put it out?"

"No, why should there be? You and Makar will only be carting the water, galloping your horses for all you're worth, making the foam fly off them all over the place, but it'll be us, the collective

farmers, who'll do the putting out. One with a bucket, someone else with a hook, another with an ax. And the man in charge will be no one else but Razmyotnov."

And he's supposed to be daft, Davydov thought with genuine astonishment. After a minute's silence he asked: "Why do you choose Razmyotnov to be in charge of the fire?"

"You're a clever lad, but you're not very quick on the uptake," Arzhanov replied, now chuckling openly. "A man gets his job in a fire according to the way he lives, according to his character. Now, you and Makar live at a gallop, you're never at peace day or night, and you don't give others any peace either; therefore, for you, being the liveliest and nippiest of us all, a smart bit of water carrying is just the job. You can't put a fire out without water, can you? But Andrei Razmyotnov, he lives at a trot, easy does it, like; he won't do more than he needs, not until you show him the whip. So what else is there for him to do in the lofty position he holds now? Hands on his hips, and give orders, make a fuss and confusion, get in everybody's way; that's his job. But we — the people, that is — are taking things quietly for the time being, just jogging along at a walk. We've got to do our job without a lot of fuss and bother; we've got to put the fire out."

Davydov slapped Arzhanov on the back, pulled him around, and looked closely into a pair of cunning laughing eyes and a kindly, bearded face. Smiling reservedly, Davydov said: "Well, Uncle Ivan, you seem to be a sly one!"

"And you aren't such a simpleton either, Davydov!" Arzhanov responded.

THEY traveled along at a walk, as before, but Davydov, realizing that none of his efforts would do any good, no longer tried to hurry Arzhanov. At times Arzhanov would jump down from the cart and walk along beside it; then he would climb on again. As they talked about the affairs of the farm, and gradually about everything, Davydov became more and more convinced that his driver was a man of by no means defective brain power; about everything he reasoned clearly and sensibly, but always from his own peculiar and unusual point of view. When the field camp showed up in the distance, with a fine braid of smoke from the plowing team's kitchen curling over it, Davydov asked: "Seriously, though, Uncle Ivan, have you been driving your horses at a walk all your life?"

"I have."

"Why didn't you tell me before that you were such a queer chap? I wouldn't have come with you."

"Why should I praise myself beforehand? Now you've seen for yourself the way I drive. One drive with me's enough; you won't want another."

"What was it made you like this?" Davydov asked with a grin.

Instead of giving a direct answer, Arzhanov said evasively: "I had a neighbor in the old days. He was a carpenter, and a bit too fond of the bottle. Fine pair of hands, but drank like a fish. He'd keep off it for a time; then as soon as he got a whiff of the stuff, he'd be at it for a month. He'd sell his last shirt for a drink, bless his heart."

"Well?"

"And his son never took a drop."

"All right, that's enough of parables; make it simple."

"You couldn't have it much simpler than this. My father was mad on hunting, and he was even madder on riding. When he was serving in his regiment, he always used to walk off with all the first prizes for racing, swordsmanship, and fancy riding. And when he came back from the regiment, he took all the first prizes at the village races every year. But he was a troublesome man, rest his soul; I say that myself, though he was my own father. One of the real dashing Cossacks, he was. He used to heat up a nail in the stove every morning to curl his whiskers with. He liked to cut a figure in front of people, especially the women. And how he could ride! Never another like him. Whenever he had to go into the village on business, he'd bring his old army horse out of the stable, put a saddle on it, and off he'd go like a bullet. He'd race around the yard, leap over the fence, and away he'd go. Only a whirlwind could catch up with him. He'd never ridden at a trot or a walk in his life. He'd do the twenty-four kilometers to the village at a gallop, and back the same way. He liked riding after hares just for the thrill of it. Not wolves, mind you, but hares. He'd start up that hare somewhere in the long grass, keep it away from the gully, then ride it down and either slash it with his whip or trample it under the horse's hoofs.

"The number of times he fell when he was going at full gallop and hurt himself badly! But he wouldn't give up his amusement. He certainly cost us something in horses. To my memory, he did in six horses; either rode 'em to death or crippled 'em. And, of course, we were ruined. One winter he killed two horses outright. They stumbled at full gallop, crashed down on the frozen earth, and that was that. We'd look out of the window, and there was Father walking home with his saddle over his shoulder. Mother used to start a wailing as if somebody had died, but it was nothing to Father. He'd go to bed for three days, grumble and grunt a bit, and before the bruises

healed on his body, he'd be off hunting again."

"If the horses were killed, how did he manage to come out alive?"

"A horse is a heavy animal. When a horse falls at a gallop, it'll turn three somersaults before it comes to rest. But Father, he'd just take his feet out of the stirrups and fly like a swallow. Of course, he'd come down with a bang and lie there as long as need be before he'd come to his senses, but then he'd get up and make for home on foot. He was a daredevil. And his bones were like iron rivets."

"He must have been tough," Davydov said admiringly.

"He certainly was, but there was somebody else that was tougher."

"Who was that?"

"My father was killed by Cossacks from our village."

**D**AVYDOV lit a cigarette and asked with interest, "Why did the Cossacks kill your father?"

"Give me a cigarette too, bless you."

"But you don't smoke, Uncle Ivan."

"I'm not a hard smoker, but I have a fling sometimes. And now that I recall this old story, my mouth feels kind of dry and salty. What did they kill him for? you ask. Well, he must have deserved it."

"But, why?"

"Because of a woman, his mistress. She was married, and her husband found out about the affair. He was afraid to tackle my father man to man — Father was not very big, but he was terribly strong. So the husband got two of his brothers to help him. It happened during Shrovetide. The three of them lay in wait for Father by the river. Merciful God, how they beat him! With clubs and an iron bar of some sort. When he was carried home in the morning, he was still unconscious and black all over, like iron. He had lain unconscious all night on the ice. Imagine, on the ice! In a week he started to speak and understand what was said to him. To make a long story short, he came to himself, but he didn't get up for two months; he spat blood and talked very, very quietly. All his insides were knocked to bits. His friends came to see him and kept asking: 'Who did it, Fyodor? Tell us and we'll. . . .' But he'd keep quiet and just smile a bit and look around, and when Mother went out of the room, he'd whisper: 'I don't remember, friends. I've wronged a good many husbands.'

"How many times did Mother kneel down before him and beg him: 'Fyodor, my dearest, at least tell me who tried to kill you. Tell me, for Christ's sake, so that I'll know whose ruin to pray

for.' But Father would put his hand on her head and stroke her hair like a child's and say: 'I don't know who it was. It was too dark. They knocked me down from behind, and I didn't get a chance to see who was pitching into me on the ice.' Or he would give the same quiet smile and say: 'What do you want to remember old wrongs for, my sweet? I'll answer for my own sins.' They called in the priest to hear his confession, and he didn't tell the priest anything either. Father was a very firm man."

"How do you know what he said to the priest?"

"Because I was lying under the bed, listening. Mother made me do it. 'Get under the bed, Vanya,' she said. 'Perhaps he'll tell the priest who his murderers were.' But Father didn't say a word about them. About five times he said in answer to the priest's questions: 'Guilty, Father,' and then he asked: 'Father Dmitri, are there horses in the other world?' The priest seemed to get frightened at that and kept saying: 'What are you talking about, Fyodor, slave of God! How can there be any horses there? You must think about the salvation of your soul.' He went on telling off Father and arguing with him for a long time, and Father just kept quiet. Then he said: 'So there are no horses there, you say. What a pity. I might have got a job as a herdsman. But if there aren't any, there'll be nothing for me to do in the other world. So I'm not going to die, and that's all there is to it.' After that, the priest gave him the sacrament in rather a hurry and went away very displeased. So I told Mother all I'd heard, and she burst into tears and said: 'He's lived a sinner and he'll die a sinner.'

"In the spring — the snow was already melting — Father got up. For two days he walked about inside the cottage, and on the third, what should I see? He's putting on his riding coat and hat. 'Go and saddle up the filly, Vanya,' he says to me. By that time all we had left in the stable was one three-year-old filly. Mother heard what he said and she was in tears. 'What good are you for riding now, Fyodor! You can hardly stand on your feet as it is. If you won't pity yourself, at least have pity on me and the children.' But he just laughed and said: 'I've never ridden at walking pace in my life, Mother. Just let me sit in the saddle once more before I die and ride around the yard at a walk. I'll just go twice around the yard and come straight back indoors.'

"I went and saddled up the filly and brought her over to the porch. Mother led Father out, leaning on her arm. He hadn't shaved for two months, and in our dark cottage we hadn't noticed how he had changed. I looked at him in the sunlight and hot tears welled up in my eyes. Two months ago, his hair had been black as a raven,

and now he'd grown a beard that was half gray, and his mustache was gray too, and his hair at the temples was white as snow. If he hadn't given a kind of tortured smile, maybe I wouldn't have cried, but when I saw that smile I couldn't stop myself. He took the reins from me and got hold of the mane, but his left arm had been broken and it had only just healed. I wanted to help him, but he wouldn't let me. He was a proud man. He was even ashamed to show how weak he was. Of course, he wanted to fly up into the saddle like a bird, as he used to do, but he didn't manage it. He got up in the stirrup, but his left hand gave way, his fingers lost their grip, and he fell flat on his back on the ground. Mother and I carried him into the house. If he'd only been spitting up blood before, now it spurted out of his mouth like water out of a fountain. Mother didn't leave the wash tub all day; she couldn't wash off the blood quick enough. We called in the priest. That night the priest gave my father extreme unction, but my father was very tough. On the third day after the priest's blessing, he got restless and started tossing about in bed; then he jumped up, looked at Mother with bloodshot but twinkling eyes, and said: 'They say that after the sacrament you mustn't step on the earth with bare feet, but I'll stand here a bit. I've traveled this earth a good deal on horseback and on foot, and it really makes me sorry to think of leaving it. Give me your hand, Mother, it's done a lot of work.'

"Mother went up and took his hand in hers. He lay back and was quiet for a little; then he said almost in a whisper: 'And I've been to blame for a lot of the tears she had to wipe away.' Then he turned his face to the wall and died, went off to the other world to watch over St. Vlas's horses."

APPARENTLY overwhelmed by his memories, Arzhanov lapsed into a long silence. Davydov coughed and asked: "But look here, Uncle Ivan, how do you know your father was killed by the husband of that — well, that woman of his, and the brothers? Did you just guess it?"

"Guess it! My father told me himself the day before he died."

Davydov even rose a little on the seat.

"How do you mean?"

"I'll tell you. In the morning Mother went out to milk the cow. I was sitting at the table learning my lessons before school, and I heard Father whisper: 'Vanya, come over here.' So I went up to him. Then he whispered: 'Bend down closer to me.' I bent down over him. 'Now listen to me, son,' he says quietly. 'You're twelve years old now, and when I'm gone, you'll be master here.'



Remember this: it was Averyan Arkhipov and his two brothers, Afanasy and cross-eyed Sergei, who beat me up. If they'd killed me straight out, I wouldn't be holding anything against them. That's what I asked them to do down there on the river, while I was still conscious. But Averyan said to me: "You won't have an easy death, you dog! You can live for a bit as a cripple and swallow as much of your own blood as you like; then you'll die!" That's why I've got a grudge against Averyan. Death's at my bedside, but I've still got a grudge against him. You're only small now, but when you grow up, remember my sufferings and kill Averyan! And don't tell anyone what I've told you — not even your mother, nobody. Swear that you won't tell anyone!" I swore that I wouldn't and with dry eyes kissed the cross my father wore around his neck."

"Bah, it sounds like the Circassians of Caucasia in the old days!" Davydov exclaimed, much roused by Arzhanov's story.

"Do you think the Circassians are the only people who've got hearts? Is the Russian heart made of stone? All people are the same, dear friend."

"Well, what happened then?" Davydov asked impatiently.

"Father was buried. I came back from the cemetery, stood with my back against the wall, and drew a line above my head with a pencil. Every month I measured my height and marked it on the wall; I kept wanting to get taller, so that I could strike Averyan. And so I became master of the house, and at that time I was twelve years old; and besides me my mother had seven other children, all younger than me.

"After Father's death, Mother often got ill, and what a lot of grief and want we had to suffer! Father may have been a daredevil, but for all his fun and games, he knew how to work. To some people he seemed a rotten kind of man, but to us, his family, he was our father, and he fed us and clothed us, and for our sakes he bent his back in the fields from spring to autumn. My shoulders were narrow in those days, and I hadn't much of a back on me either, but I had to look after the whole household and work like a grown-up Cossack. When Father was alive, four of us used to go to school, but after his death we all had to give it up. I made Nurka, my ten-year-old sister, milk the cow and cook instead of Mother. My young brothers helped me with the farmwork. But I didn't forget to make my mark on the wall every month. I grew poorly that year — grief and poverty didn't let me grow properly. But I watched Averyan as a young wolf watches a bird from the rushes. I knew about every step he took, where he went, where he rode. I knew everything about him.

"The boys of my age used to play all kinds of games on Sundays, but I never had time — I was head of the house. On weekdays they would go to school while I cleaned out the cattle shed. I could have cried with grief for the bitter life I had to live in those days. And bit by bit I began to keep away from the other boys of my age. I became unsociable and silent as a rock. I didn't want to be with people. Then people in the village started talking about me. 'Vanya Arzhanov,' they'd say, 'he's a bit queer in the head, a bit touched.' 'Curse you,' I thought, 'you ought to be in my boots! The kind of life I lead would teach you something.' And I started hating the folk in our village; I couldn't bear the sight of them.

"Give me another cigarette, dear friend."

ARZHANOV took the cigarette clumsily. His fingers were trembling noticeably. With his eyes closed, pursing his lips funnily and making loud sucking noises, he took a long time getting a light from Davydov's cigarette.

"And what about Averyan?"

"Well, what about him? He went his own way. Couldn't forgive his wife for my father's love, beat her so badly that she died within a year. The next autumn he married another, a young girl from our own village. 'Well, Averyan,' I thought, 'you won't live long with that young wife of yours.'

"Without telling Mother, I started saving up money quietly, and in the autumn, instead of going to the nearest storage bin, I drove a cart of wheat to Kalach and sold it there, then bought a shotgun and ten cartridges from a fellow at the market. On the way back I tried out the gun and wasted three cartridges. It was a rotten little gun; the hammer didn't work properly. I had two misfires out of three, and only the third cartridge went off. When I got home I buried the gun under the wall in the barn and didn't say a word to anyone about it. And then I started watching for a chance to catch Averyan alone. For a long time I didn't have any luck. Either there were too many people about or something else would crop up and stop me from striking him. But in the end I got what I'd been waiting for.

"The point was, I didn't want to kill him in the village — that was the trouble. On the Day of Intercession he went off to the district fair. He went alone, without his wife. I heard he had gone alone and crossed myself, because otherwise I should have had to kill both of them.

"For two days and a night, while I was lying in wait for him by the roadside, I neither ate nor drank nor had a wink of sleep. I prayed fiercely

in that ditch and begged God to make Averyan come back alone and not with a company of Cossacks. And a merciful God heard my childish prayer. On the evening of the second day I looked up, and there was Averyan riding along the road alone. And the number of carts I had watched go by, the number of times I had felt my heart thumping when I thought I heard the sound of Averyan's horses in the distance! He came up level with me, and I jumped out of the ditch and said: 'Get down, Uncle Averyan, and pray to God!' He went white as limewash and reined in his horses. He was a big, tough Cossack, but what could he do to me? I had a gun in my hands. 'What's the idea, you little brat?' he shouted. And I said to him: 'Get off and kneel down. You'll find out what the idea is in a minute.' He was a daring devil! He jumped down from the cart and started toward me with his bare hands. I let him come near — no further away than that clump of grass — and fired at him point-blank."

"Suppose you had had a misfire?"

Arzhanov smiled. "Then he'd have sent me to help my father grazing those herds in the other world."

"What happened then?"

"The horses bolted at the sound of the shot, but I couldn't move a step. My legs had gone weak, and I was trembling like a leaf in the wind. Averyan was lying in front of me, but I couldn't even go up to him, I was so shaken. Somehow I finally collected my wits, went up to him, spat in his face, and began going through his pockets. I found his purse. There were twenty-eight ruble notes in it, a gold five-ruble piece, and two or three rubles' worth of change. I counted that up afterwards, at home. The rest of his money he must have spent on presents for his young wife. I threw the empty purse away on the road, then jumped into the ditch. It was a long time ago, but I remember it all as clearly as if it were yesterday. I buried the gun and cartridges in the ditch and went home. When the first snow came, I went out at night, dug up my property, brought it back to the village, and buried it in an old hollow willow tree."

"Why did you take the money?" Davydov snapped fiercely.

"Why not?"

"Why did you take it? I said."

"I needed it," Arzhanov answered simply. "In those times, poverty was gnawing at us worse than a shirtful of lice."

Davydov jumped off the cart and walked for a long time in silence. Arzhanov was also silent. Then Davydov asked: "Is that all?"

"No, that's not all, dear friend. The investigators came down and nosed about everywhere

and went away empty-handed. Who'd have thought of suspecting me? And soon afterwards, cross-eyed Sergei, Averyan's brother, got a cold chopping timber and died; it got into his lungs. And I began to get very worried. 'What if Afanasy, too, dies his own death,' I thought, 'and my hand that Father blessed to punish his enemies lies idle?' And I got in a real fluster."

"Wait a minute," Davydov interrupted him. "Your father only mentioned Averyan, but you seem to have had it in for all three of them."

"What of it? Father had his own wishes, and I had mine. So I was in a fluster. I killed Afanasy through his window when he was having supper. That night I made my last mark on the wall, then wiped them all off with a cloth. And I threw the gun and the cartridges in the river; I didn't need them any more. I had carried out my father's will and my own. Not long afterwards, Mother was about to die. One night she called me over to her and asked: 'Was it you who killed them, Vanya?' 'Yes, Mother,' I said. She didn't say anything. Just took my right hand and placed it on her heart."

ARZHANOV flicked the reins, the horses quickened their pace, and looking at Davydov with childishly clear gray eyes he asked: "Now you won't keep asking me why I don't drive horses fast, will you?"

"No, I won't," Davydov replied. "You ought to be a water carrier with a bullock cart, Uncle Ivan."

"I've asked Yakov Lukich Ostrovnov a number of times to make me that, but he won't have it. He wants to have his laugh on me till the last."

"Why?"

"When I was a boy, I worked for him for a year and a half."

"Did you?"

"Yes, dear friend, I did. Didn't you know Ostrovnov always used to have people working for him?" Arzhanov wrinkled his eyes cunningly. "He did, dear friend, he did. About four years ago, he quieted down, when the taxes began to squeeze him. He rolled himself into a ball, like a snake before it strikes. Had there been no collectivization and a reduction of taxes, Yakov Lukich would have showed his horns, I can tell you. He's a real vicious kulak, and you're nursing a snake."

After a prolonged silence Davydov said: "We'll see to that, we'll get to the bottom of Ostrovnov. But say what you like, Uncle Ivan, you're a man with a bit of a quirk."

Arzhanov smiled, staring thoughtfully into the distance. "Well, a quirk, you know — how shall I

put it? Suppose you've got a cherry tree with a lot of different branches. I come along and cut one to make a whip — cherry wood makes a good strong whip. When it was growing, it had all kinds of peculiarities in it, with its knots and leaves. Beautiful it was in its own way. And now I've whittled it down. Here it is." Arzhanov pulled his whip out from under the seat and showed Davydov the brown, gnarled cherry-wood whip handle. "Here it is. Nothing to look at. And it's the same with a man: without a quirk, he's bare and wretched like this whip here. Take Nagulnov, he's learning some strange language — that's his quirk; old man Kramshov has been collecting all kinds of matchboxes for twenty years — that's his quirk;

you've got yourself mixed up with Lushka Nagulnova — that's your quirk; a drunk goes down the street, trips, and rubs his back on the fence — that's another quirk. Yes, dear chairman, and if you take a man's quirks away from him, he'll be as bare and flat as this whip handle here."

Arzhanov held the whip out to Davydov and said with the same pensive smile: "Here, hold this in your hand for a while and think it over. Maybe you'll see things clearer."

Davydov pushed Arzhanov's hand aside vexedly. "Go to hell! I'll get things clear without that."

They rode the rest of the way to the camp in silence.

*Translated by Robert Daglish.*

## DAWN

BY BORIS PASTERNAK

*A poet whose translations of Shakespeare are the best in Russian and whose novel, DOCTOR ZHIVAGO, is still a subject of controversy, Boris Pasternak is in the front rank of contemporary Soviet writers.*

You were the be-all in my destiny.  
Then came the war, the devastation;  
And for a long, long time there was  
No word from you, not even a sign!

And after many, many years  
I find again your voice disturbs me!  
All night I read your testament —  
And found my consciousness returning:

I'm drawn to people, to be one of a crowd;  
To share their morning animation!  
I'm ready to smash everything to smithereens  
And make all kneel in schoolboy penance:

And so I dash down all the stairs  
As if this were my first sortie  
Into these streets and their deep snow  
And pavements that long since died out:

Each way I turn I see awakenings, lights, comfort.  
Men gulp their tea, they hurry to catch trolleys.  
Within the space of a few minutes  
You'd never recognize the town.

The blizzard weaves its nets in gateways  
Out of the thickly falling flakes.  
And all, to get to work in time,  
Dash madly, hardly taking breakfast.

I feel for all these people  
As if I'd been within their hides;  
I feel I'm melting, even as the snow melts,  
I feel I glower, even as the morning glowers.

The nameless ones are part of me!  
Children also, the trees, and stay-at-homes.  
All these are victors over me —  
And therein lies my sole victory!

*Translated by Bernard Guilbert Guerney.*



# AT THE BEGINNING OF LIFE

## My Meeting with Gorky

BY SAMUIL MARSHAK

*A poet who enjoys particular success in his books for children, SAMUIL MARSHAK was discovered by Gorky. He learned English in London in 1911 and there began his brilliant translations of Blake, Wordsworth, and Burns, as well as the English ballads and nursery rhymes. We have selected this chapter from his reminiscences now being serialized in NOVY MIR.*

**I**T HAPPENED on a warm August day in 1904 out at Vladimir Vasilevich Stasov's house in the country. From year to year, for more than twenty years, he had been spending the summer months in the village of Starozhilovka, near Pargolov. He rented the same house from local residents, the Bezrukovs. The spacious two-storied log house with glass-enclosed verandas on both floors was always open to friends. How many improvised concerts we had there, how many literary readings and family celebrations! Sometimes, during the Stasov home concerts, crowds of people would gather outside the fence and listen to the sounds wafting out of the open windows.

On this particular day, guests were expected who were especially dear to Vladimir Vasilevich. We prepared for their coming gaily, ingeniously, and painstakingly. Among other festivities Vladimir Vasilevich had thought of delivering to the guests a special welcome, comical, but at the same time, solemn. The sculptor Ginzburg had done a pen-and-ink drawing of Stasov's summer house on a large sheet of cardboard and had left space under the drawing for some text. I was assigned the task of writing the greeting and doing it in the shortest possible time, as we had to copy the text and decorate it with ornamental gold and scarlet initial letters before the guests arrived.

I quickly composed something in the nature of a



majestic scroll of honor in the ancient style, under the heading of "The Three Russian Heroes." As is the custom with Russian epics, I gave first place to Ilya — not Muromets, but Repin. He was followed by new names not out of the epics: Maxim Gorky and Fyodor the Great Chaliapin.

Considering that my job was done, I slid down the banister of the porch and broke into a run along the sandy path of the garden, rejoicing in the August sun and the mild breeze which was permeated with the scent of resin and heather. Then suddenly I was again called back into the house, to the lower veranda, and was put to work. It turned out that I had omitted from the text one other guest — Glazunov, the composer. What could I do? There was no time to copy everything over again. Vladimir Vasilevich came to my assistance just in time. He cheered me up and advised me to add just one word to the heading and one line to the text.

The heading turned out even more unusual than it had been: "To the Three Russian Heroes and a Fourth." And the scroll itself now closed with these lines about Glazunov:

"A younger brother but a greater Hero — Alexander — the Light Konstantinovich!"

There was nothing surprising in my having forgotten one of our most famous guests in my greetings. It was the meeting with Gorky to which I was looking forward more than anything else that day. I had already met Repin more than once. I had had the opportunity to see Chaliapin, too — true, only from afar and in that very special glamorous world that the theater was for me. But Gorky's name meant more to me than the names of the other guests, who were his seniors in age and in fame. His fame, too, was of a somewhat special kind. Not only what he wrote but he himself attracted a general curiosity and either ardent admiration or just as passionate hatred.

Even Vladimir Vasilevich Stasov, who was always sympathetic to everything forceful and original, had not immediately taken to him. At first he had spoken of Gorky with reserve and a little distrust. This was not surprising. They were people of different epochs. Old Stasov, who was a man four years older than Tolstoy, had had to perform a great and complicated task to be able to appreciate Gorky's style and direction. But he soon became the most avid of readers, and later even the most avid of admirers, of Gorky's prose.

Reading the little green-bound volumes, he seemed to grow young again. He would treat everybody who visited him, whether he knew him well or not, to excerpts from Gorky and say joyfully: "What a mighty man! What original talent! Why, this is a first-rate poet and thinker of the stature of Byron and Victor Hugo."

I listened to Vladimir Vasilevich and rejoiced in the fact that, although he was eighty, in arguments about Gorky he was at one with the young people. And to the young people Gorky seemed the most contemporary of all contemporary writers. For my generation his voice was the voice of the times, not only of today but of tomorrow.

And now this man about whom we had thought and argued so much would just walk in here, would climb these steps and would talk, joke, and listen to music with the rest of us. And perhaps I would succeed in observing in him something I had found neither in his books nor in the talk about him.

THE three of them came together — Repin, Chaliapin, and Gorky. The wheels of the Finnish gigs rumbled up to the gates of the Stasov country house, the gate creaked, and into the garden, conversing merrily, walked not three Russian heroes but three of the most ordinary and, at the same time, the most extraordinary men.

The prankish ceremonial of a greeting was carried out to the last detail. A flourish was played loudly, if I remember rightly, on two grand pianos. The scroll was brought up. The reading of the greeting fell to me, the youngest of the guests, an adolescent in school uniform with shining buttons and carved letters on his belt buckle.

I was complimented; my hand was shaken; I was embraced. Only Gorky said not a word. In general, he was not too talkative at first and only gradually entered into the conversation.

I looked at all three of them without lowering my eyes. Repin and Chaliapin looked quite smart, especially Chaliapin. He was dressed in a light suit that had the look of a sun-drenched day. The summer suit fit this handsome, big, stately man smartly and well.

There was not the shadow of smartness about Gorky's appearance. He was dressed like some railroad foreman or the head of a construction gang. His dark jacket with its stand-up collar was tightly buttoned; his trousers were tucked into the tops of his soft Russian boots. But his whole body, lean and well-proportioned despite a slight stoop, and his small, well-set head with its thick wings of chestnut-colored hair falling over his temples, and his blue-gray eyes with their intent look and their long lashes shadowing them gave one the feeling of a neatness, a clearness of purpose, and a restrained strength that lent every movement of the man purpose, dignity, and even grace. He lost nothing by comparison with the magnificent Chaliapin; and Repin, who was wearing a festive light-gray suit, seemed rather prosaic alongside Gorky.

As was often the case in the Stasov household, the entire evening was filled with song, with music, and with the "great epics of the wandering minstrels," as Vladimir Vasilevich jokingly expressed it. And all the time I kept glancing at Gorky involuntarily, listening to his rather muffled accent with the stress on the "o", taking note of his very special smile, at times so mischievous and provocative, as if he were pulling off some kind of amusing boyish prank.

He was not at all the man we knew from his photographs. I had expected to see a pensive and melancholy long-haired youth in a Russian peasant blouse, but here facing me was a mature, self-confident man. Everything about him was a surprise to me: his hugeness, his muffled bass, the calm, businesslike manner in which he spoke about contemporary literature, about the new publishing house of which he was in charge.

On every one of my visits to the Starozhilovka summer house something new and interesting was sure to happen. But in my memory no day had yet turned out as well as this one. Vladimir Vasilevich was animated and affable as never before, and probably for this reason everybody felt wonderfully free and easy.

Ponderous and most serious in appearance, Glazunov, without the trace of a smile, told us an incredible story at dinner about some drunk in the street who had mistaken him for a horsecar and even tried to clamber up onto the outside seat of the car.

The sculptor Ginzburg, a little, wizened, and extraordinarily agile man, mimicked a small-town tailor at work, a drayman dozing off with the reins in his hand, a quarrel between two old women neighbors over an egg a chicken had laid in the wrong yard. I can remember that he needed a kerchief for this last little scene to hide his beard and the bald spot which gave greater height to his already high forehead.

He performed the whole show with such humor and grace, with such subtle keenness of observation that every gesture of his little hands, every movement of his eyebrows and his half-lowered eyelids remained fixed in the memory of the spectator. According to the stories of eyewitnesses, Leo Tolstoy, looking at him, would laugh until tears came into his eyes and involuntarily imitate him, at times wrinkling his forehead, at other times moving his lips.

And then Chaliapin sang. He sang unstintingly, choosing songs that were special favorites of Vladimir Vasilevich. Among the pieces that he sang were the majestic ballad *At Twelve O'clock Midnight*, austere in a military way, but at the same time full of a sense of mystery; and the rollicking and desperate and sinister dance *The Trepak* by

Moussorgsky; and right after this, the choppy tongue twister *The Seminary Student*, repeating a series of Latin grammar-rule exceptions without any real reason, the same exceptions I had to learn by heart at school:

"*Panis, piscis, crinis, finis,*  
*Ignis, lapis, pulvis, linis.*"

This little cramming session was gradually transformed into the unsophisticated, bitter, though, at the same time, humorous lamentation of an overgrown seminary student complaining about his ill-fated life:

"And so the priest gave me a tug

By the scruff of the neck, by the neck! . . ."

And it was the same voice singing these words that had just sounded with the peal of a copper bell which had commanded the obedience of the mighty, measured step of phantom troops, a voice that had resounded with the rage of a blizzard singing its witchery and causing a poor little drunk to dance until he fell, and then lulling him to sleep forever.

**P**ERHAPS it was that evening that I first sensed not only the power of music but the great power of the word when it is fully understood to its complete end and when it stands in its proper place, supported by the whole breadth of breathing, by the full power of rhythm, by the full depth of the image. Was it any wonder that my heart almost stopped beating when, after Chaliapin's singing, Vladimir Vasilevich suddenly suggested that I recite my verses?

Still, I did recite. I don't remember which ones precisely — better than fifty years have passed since then. It seems to me that they were an excerpt from a poem by Mickiewicz that I had translated and, in addition, some lyrical poetry. Just one thing has remained sharply etched in my memory. From the first line I recited, I felt a serious, kind attention which immediately gave me a feeling of confidence and made it possible for me to regain my composure.

When I finished, Gorky sat down next to me, tenderly patted my hand, and began to ask me what I read, what books I liked, where I came from, and where I was studying. And all of a sudden I felt amazingly at ease and talked simply with this man, who just yesterday had been but a name and a book for me. He listened with the closest attention, leaning slightly toward me, to my brief history. You might have thought that there was nothing of deeper interest to him than the life of this boy on whom he had just set his eyes for the first time.

But at this point Vladimir Vasilevich cut into



our conversation. Putting his big arm around my shoulder, he began to tell Gorky that of late I had been ailing frequently and that it would seem that this area was harmful to me. Gorky thought for a minute and then asked me simply: "Would you like to live in Yalta? Fyodor and I will arrange it for you. Right, Fyodor?"

"We'll arrange it immediately!" Chaliapin called out gaily over the heads of the people who were surrounding him.

A month or two passed. And all of a sudden, three telegrams came to us across the Moscow gates, across the Putilov Bridge: one in my father's name and two in mine. As I remember, these were the first telegrams I had ever received in my life. Both were from Gorky in Yalta. To this very day I can remember the text of the telegrams. One consisted of just a few words: "You have been accepted at the Yalta High School. Details follow. Peshkov [Gorky's real name]."

The second was a little longer: "Come. You will stay in Yalta on the corner of Morskaya and Autskaya in the Shiryayev summer house. Ask for Katerina Pavlovna Peshkova, my wife. Peshkov."

The telegram sent to my father was signed "Director Gottlieb." It carried the same news, but in a more official form.

I was already acquainted with the name of the director. Not too long ago this big, portly man, with his wavy head of hair, had been teaching Latin in our school.

And so everything was settled. All that there was left for me to do was to gather together some clothes and my books and to set out for the Black Sea on my new wanderings.

**I**N THE train I hardly moved away from the window. The northern forests gave way to the fields and copses of Central Russia. In white-stoned Sevastopol I was blinded for the first time by the southern sun and by the blueness of the sea that splintered up its rays. Another few hours on a steamship — a real seagoing steamship, with two decks glistening with fresh paint and copper — and there before me was Yalta: the semicircle of the embankment, the many-tiered city climbing up along the incline of the hills, the rust-colored tendrils of the vineyards, and the cypresses that looked like monks covered from head to foot in dark cloaks.

Announcing its arrival with a husky, unbearable, penetrating whistle, the ship slowed its pace and, shaking all over, began moving toward the pier sideways. The propeller screws of the ship ripped up the mirrorlike surface of the sea as if it were turning it inside out. Now, in place of an

iridescent blue between shipboard and the pier, there was a bubbling white lacerated foam swirling up, glistening in the sun with colored sparks.

Together with the motley crowd of travelers, I descended the gangplank onto the pier, and with my light luggage in hand walked first along the embankment and then along the stone walks leading upward. Everything here was new for me, unexpected; it was as if I weren't in a real city, inhabited, serious, businesslike, but somewhere in the midst of a stage set, festive but temporary. Everything here was so unlike anything I had seen up to then — the lacy iron grilles covered with ivy, already sprayed with the crimson paint of autumn; the white summer homes with their broad balconies; the well-kept gardens with their thick, almost metallic leaves of laurel. And finally I came to the Shiryayev summer house on the corner of Morskaya and Autskaya.

After carefully opening the iron gate, I found myself in front of a house which had been built of natural stone in the middle of an area surrounded by carefully trimmed thick bushes with tiny, stiff leaves.

I climbed the stairs and on the threshold was met by a young woman, light of step, energetic, with smoothly combed but still fluffy, dark, chestnut-colored hair. Her face looked stern, but her lips were lightly touched with an appealing, sweet, friendly smile.

Grasping my hand in her small but strong hand, she led me into the house, which was drenched with sunshine, with the sea breeze, and with the dry fragrance of the southern garden. I followed her, not yet guessing that these few steps would be leading me not only from one room to another but into another stage of my life — from adolescence to youth.

Here, in the heart of Gorky's family, in this seaside city, I was to come face to face with the years, of which these long-familiar, sweeping lines of poetry had given me a forewarning: "Above the flat gray expanse of the sea the wind gathers the clouds. . . ."

Gorky himself came down here after a term of imprisonment in the Petropavlovsk Fortress, noticeably thinner, and because of this, seeming even taller. In prison he had grown a short, tough, reddish beard and got to look somehow like a northern White Sea captain.

The entire Gorky household at that time seemed like a ship still fixed to its moorings but flinching with every wave and rising higher and higher with the swelling tide.

Nineteen hundred and five was approaching, the threshold of a new period in history, the threshold of my youth.

*Translated by Bernard Kolen.*

# Ilya Ehrenburg

*A Russian press correspondent in the Paris of 1912, who was an early friend and collector of Picasso's and came to know Hemingway well at the time of the Spanish Civil War, ILYA EHRENBURG is today a novelist noted for his satire and for his discerning criticism of Western and Soviet literature. His novels, THE STORM and THE THAW, were both published in this country, and the latter was the subject of considerable controversy in 1955.*



## LITERATURE

### IN THE AGE OF THE SPUTNIKS

THERE are certain events that it is hard to ignore. You can't sleep through wars; sirens or summonses are sure to awaken you. A storm topples the trees. If a neighbor dies, his body is carried out of the house. The newborn babe cries on the other side of the wall. But an artist must be able to hear the grass growing, for that is why he is an artist. He should discern the approach of spring from the rooks and the snowdrops. His vision is comparable to an X-ray machine, his heart to a seismograph.

Great changes are taking place in the present-day world. Some of them hit one between the eyes, others pass unnoticed. Who can fail to observe the change that has occurred in the language of statesmen, diplomats, and journalists? Talk of a notorious push button which, if pressed, would be enough to have hydrogen bombs showered over an ideological adversary is becoming anachronistic. The monologues of statesmen are going out of fashion; the era of dialogues has opened.

Is it necessary to speak of the impression made on everyone by the successes of Soviet science? Simple folk used to be impressed less by theoretical discoveries than by useful inventions; it was not Newton's laws but the first steam engine, not Rutherford's splintering of the atomic nucleus but the tragedy of Hiroshima which struck their imagination. But the launching of earth and moon satellites, it seems, has now for the first

time brought the scientists a victory bereft of any corresponding utilitarian significance; it promises no increase in prosperity or comfort, yet it has inspired all mankind. The world has become broader; notions of time, of infinity are changing. Vast changes have also occurred in the daily life of our country. The writer's task is to comprehend these changes and to draw the appropriate conclusions.

Art simply vegetates in the supply train; its place is with the reconnaissance. A writer cannot remain in the rear with impunity for even a brief period. Let us say frankly that Soviet literature has known periods of greater boldness and greater achievements than the last few years. This is not in itself so terrible; books are not composed by the stop watch nor by the calendar, for the creative process differs from the working of a machine. The distressing thing is the discrepancy between a mass of literary productions and the spiritual growth and changing consciousness of the readers.

There is no use being needlessly boastful or despondent. Our readers are not only countless; they are now more profound, more demanding, more complicated (in the best sense of the word) than were the contemporaries of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov; yet, despite the achievements of Soviet literature, we know we still have not reached the heights of our predecessors.

I recently saw an article in the *Saturday Review* on "Readers and Writers in Russia." Its author, Norman Cousins, describes a conversation he had with me, while he was visiting Moscow, about the problems of Soviet and American literature. The talk was friendly, and the article was by an American who, I think, sincerely desires an end to the Cold War. Norman Cousins correctly reported many of the ideas I advanced during our talk, although in certain places his memory betrayed him. For example, he writes that in my opinion there are no Soviet writers who can be compared to Hemingway, Steinbeck, Faulkner, Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, and other American authors. I have a very high regard for these American writers, above all for Hemingway (I know and love him), but in speaking of what we have not yet achieved, I was not referring to him, and still less, of course, to Upton Sinclair. I was thinking of Soviet novels as compared with Gogol's *The Great-coat*, or *War and Peace*, *Crime and Punishment*, and Chekhov's *A Boring Story*.

IN SOME forty-odd years, Soviet literature has known some major achievements. I shall not list any living authors, for it is only too easy to overlook one or another, to put them in the wrong order — and besides, we still suffer from parochial preferences. I shall simply name a few works by dead writers: Gorky's *My Universities* and *The Artamanov Business*, Mayakovsky's poetry, Alexei Tolstoy's *Peter the Great* and *Nikita's Childhood*, Babel's stories, Fadeev's *Havoc*, and Yesenin's verse. These are major, not ephemeral books. But our task is not to list the achievements of the past but to try to peer into the future.

A lively controversy is at present raging among Soviet youth, the subject of which may cause surprise: Isn't art destined to perish, or at any rate, doomed to oblivion? Is it really necessary for the people of our age? This might seem surprising. Why should it be precisely now, in a period of greater prosperity and social solidification, that such a suspicion should occur to even an insignificant segment of youth? It is not just a question of the dazzling achievements of science and the development of technology. Other and more serious reasons — the inadequacies of aesthetic education, the shades of the past, half nihilistic, half constructive — are raised in certain letters from readers of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

My attention was drawn, among the letters of those participating in the debate, to one written by an ordinary engineer, working at some distance from large cities. He wrote: "Of course, art, with its millennial past, cannot die out overnight. I am

deprived of the theater here, but I subscribe to two magazines and I can get new books from the library. Like all those working in our industry, I am proud of our successes, of our responsibility, and I am beginning to ask myself and my comrades, Why is it necessary that someone should register your successes? There are statistics; people can see things for themselves; and in the future the historians will take care of the description."

Although the author of the letter eventually comes to the conclusion that art has "outlived its time," his arguments — which are quite correct — are directed not at art but at the surrogates of art. A writer engaged in simply registering the achievements of nonwriters reminds one of an airplane equipped with wings, cabin, seats, and even a timetable, which never took off, and will never take off, from the ground.

All of us deep-rooted, stubbornly anchored earth dwellers rejoice in and are enthused by a photograph of the hidden side of the moon. But we may well consider the sad state of many readers who wonder why our writers so seldom show them the hidden side of the human heart. To expose what is plain to all is patently unnecessary.

The fundamental task of literature, in my opinion, is to illuminate the spiritual world of one's contemporaries, their secret thoughts and feelings, their doubts and hopes, their joys and sufferings, and that immense will power which can overcome all trials and tribulations. We have been a long time building our Soviet home. We have not stopped building; we shall always be building. The will to construction, to creation cannot weaken as long as the heart beats. But there was a time when the thoughts of Soviet citizens were, above all, directed to the mighty task of construction. We lived, as it were, in mud huts, in barracks. Today, for the first time, people have a chance to meditate at ease on how to embellish and elevate life in an already constructed dwelling; they have finished the building and are working on the superstructure and the trimmings. At the same time, they are preoccupied by questions of human relationships, morality, aesthetics, and stirrings of culture. This opens up new possibilities for writers and demands new flights of the creative imagination.

To our great joy, we are no longer building skyscrapers in the midst of ramshackle huts, but we are building hundreds of thousands of good houses. What we need in literature are not declamatory skyscrapers but homes imbued with real life and the warmth of the human presence. Words, like money, are subject to the laws of limited issue, and we are only too familiar with the inflation of sonorous words, exalted tirades, grandiose images strewn over five or fifty pages of a novel. Modesty



is inherent in authentic grandeur, and restraint in authentic passion.

Some may say that I am repudiating the romantic. But surely romanticism can be varied and does not necessarily have to lean on figures or run around on stilts. There are a great many genres and diverse kinds of writers. But it seems to me difficult for a writer in any one genre to soar up into the clouds without making a preliminary descent into the deep mine shafts of men's hearts and without unearthing there a few grains of precious emotion.

The prevailing literary genres are decidedly poor and boring. Where, for example, has satire vanished? The author's approach to a theme is too often hackneyed, monotonously familiar. The visitors to the Soviet pavilion at the Brussels Fair were amazed at the number of different kinds of bread we have, but our readers could hardly experience similar feelings after plowing through the latest number of a literary magazine.

It is now being said that critics should exercise a certain moderation in their praise as well as in their condemnation. If a young author's book makes pleasant reading, one is nevertheless obliged to point out its failings, but if it is bad, this should be mentioned only in a whisper. Of course, criticism should be humane, honest, free of mendacity and gross insults, but at the same time it should be passionate and, most important of all, should stimulate argument. When we talk among ourselves in an intimate group we argue, for tastes are linked to individuality and estimates vary according to a kinship or aversion which is of the heart and not just of the tongue. But in print an argument about a work of art rapidly terminates in an irrevocable judgment, and the urge to argue fades away. Young writers are left to their own devices; some of them, cleverer or weaker than others, draw the conclusion that it is better to write about something recognized which presents no risks, invites no bold quests, offers no dark corners. It is astonishing that in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* readers carry on the debate on the theme "Is art necessary?" almost abstractly, but in the literary reviews and magazines, where all are convinced that art is indispensable, there is almost no argument as to whether this or that work deserves the title of art.

Young writers are confronted by the task not only of mastering their craft but of saying what has remained unsaid, of expressing the unspoken by finding their themes, their heroes, and, ultimately, themselves. This can be done only by participating in life — not by contemplating people from the side lines but by sharing their passions, enthusiasms, setbacks, their holidays and work-days. In a review of a book by a young man of

letters, I read, "rather weak, the story needs to be polished up." The story was distinctly weak, but it was sufficiently cleverly written to hide from the indifferent reviewer the impassivity of the man who had written it. What was needed was not the polishing up of the story but the humanizing of its author.

This monotony can be found even in decorative details: in stories and poems, the sun shines or the snow sparkles far more often than the rain drizzles. This, they say, is due to the author's optimism. Optimism, in my opinion, should not reveal itself in the choice of the weather or of a happy ending but in the author's approach to the theme and the characters. One can be an optimist in understanding the road which a man, a nation, or mankind must travel and still not be afraid to depict the rainy day, and along with it boredom, grief, and sorrow.

I said that the rejection of art by certain young people and their joking attitude toward certain works attest a weakness in aesthetic education. Part of the blame must consequently be laid on us, the writers. The leaders of the Party, the industrial managers, the engineers, the agronomists have rapidly raised the standard of living of the population. The astrophysicists are groping their way toward the moon. But people judge our work by the customs and usages of daily life, by the relationships a man has with his comrades and his family, by one's responsiveness or impassivity, one's sensitivity or indifference. A writer is, to a certain extent, responsible not only for his readers but for those he has failed to make his readers. Is it really more important to reach the moon than to understand the heart of the man living in the next street?

I say all this because I am an optimist. I often meet unusual readers. I see before me a rising young generation which searches, criticizes, loves, hates, and boldly looks ahead. I am convinced that some truly great writers will emerge from this youth. When polite people meet a man of my age, they invariably say, "You are looking wonderful today, even better than the last time!"

Just as they lull the elderly, so they lull a senile society. Our world is young; it changes with each new day, opening up a horizon of unlimited hopes and boundless expectations. Our sputniks successfully circle the earth. A Tolstoy, a Chekhov must come forth, for no matter how big the earth, no matter how small the heart of man, the heart must and will have its sputniks: novels, poems, canvases, symphonies. Extraordinary machines have replaced the plow in the village of Mikhailovskoe, but the tractor driver awaits the strains of that lyre which arouses man's good feelings.

*Translated by Curtis Gale.*

# BROOKLYN BRIDGE

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY, *who was born in 1893 and died in 1930, was one of the most exciting poets during the last years of the czars and the first decade of the Soviet Union. This poem, written during his three months' visit to the United States in 1925, is taken from THE BEDBUG AND SELECTED POETRY by Vladimir Mayakovsky, edited by and with an introduction by Patricia Blake.*

Give, Coolidge,  
a shout of joy!  
I too won't spare words  
about good things.

Blush  
at my praise,  
go red as our flag,  
however  
united-states-  
of-America  
you may be.  
As a crazed believer  
enters  
a church,  
retreats  
into a monastery cell,  
austere and plain;  
so I,  
in graying evening  
haze,  
humbly set foot  
on Brooklyn Bridge.  
As a conqueror presses  
into a city  
all shattered,  
on cannon with muzzles  
craning high as a giraffe,  
so, drunk with glory,  
eager to live,  
I clamber,  
in pride,  
upon Brooklyn Bridge.  
As a foolish painter  
plunges his eye,  
sharp and loving,  
into a museum madonna,  
so I,  
from the near skies  
bestrewn with stars,  
gaze  
at New York  
through the Brooklyn Bridge.



New York,  
                   heavy and stifling  
                                           till night,  
 has forgotten  
                   its hardships  
                                           and height;  
 and only  
                   the household ghosts  
 ascend  
                   in the lucid glow of its windows.  
 Here  
                   the elevateds  
                                           drone softly.  
 And only  
                   their gentle  
                                           droning  
 tells us:  
                   here trains are crawling and rattling  
 like dishes  
                   being cleared  
                                           into a cupboard.

*Lithograph by Howard Cook. Courtesy of the Print Department, Boston Public Library.*

# BY VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

While a shopkeeper fetched sugar  
from a mill  
that seemed to project  
out of the water —  
masts  
passing under the bridge  
looked  
no larger than pins.  
I am proud  
of just this  
mile of steel;  
upon it,  
my visions come to life, erect —  
here's a fight  
for construction  
instead of style,  
an austere disposition  
of bolts  
and steel.  
If  
the end of the world  
befall —  
and chaos  
smash our planet  
to bits,  
and what remain  
be  
this  
bridge, rearing above the dust of destruction;  
then,  
as huge ancient lizards  
are rebuilt  
from bones  
finer than needles.  
so,  
from this bridge,  
a geologist of the centuries  
will succeed  
in recreating  
our contemporary world.  
He will say:  
yonder paw  
of steel  
once joined  
the seas and the prairies;  
from this spot,  
Europe  
rushed to the West,  
scattering  
to the wind  
Indian feathers.

This rib reminds us  
of a machine —  
just imagine,  
would there be hands enough,  
after planting  
a steel foot  
in Manhattan;  
to yank  
Brooklyn to oneself  
by the lip?  
By the cables  
of electric strands,  
I recognize  
the era succeeding  
the steam age —  
here  
men  
had ranted  
on radio.  
Here  
men  
had ascended  
in planes.  
For some,  
life  
here  
had no worries;  
for others,  
it was a prolonged  
and hungry howl.  
From this spot,  
jobless men  
leapt  
headlong  
into the Hudson.  
Now my canvas  
is unobstructed  
as it stretches  
on cables of string  
to the feet of the stars.  
I see:  
here  
stood Mayakovsky,  
composing verse  
syllable by syllable.  
I stare  
as an Eskimo gapes at a train,  
I seize on it  
as a tick fastens to an ear.  
Brooklyn Bridge —  
Yes . . .  
That's quite a thing!

*Translated by George Reavey.*





# A WALK ALONG THE NEVA

## *The Siege of Leningrad*

BY OLGA BERGOLTS

*One of the leading women poets, whose war poems, collected in her **LENINGRAD NOTEBOOK** (1942), are among her finest contributions, OLGA BERGOLTS has used the autobiographical vein to give this poignant account of the Siege of Leningrad.*

I LEARNED about day stars during my adolescence, in Novgorod province. I got the information from my teacher, Peter Petrovich, when he dropped in on the village librarian one evening. Peter Petrovich was an old man with small, deep-set eyes and a long, sparse, snow-white beard, who knew many interesting and secret things about the universe, life, and people. The July evening had darkened and closed in, the first stars could be seen through the wide window of the reading room, and Peter Petrovich said that the stars never disappear from the sky; that besides evening stars and night stars there are day stars. They are even brighter and prettier than night stars, but they are never seen in the sky because the sun eclipses them. Day stars can be seen only in deep and silent wells. So far above us as to be invisible and unattainable, they burn in the depths of the earth, in the black reflection of water, with sharp little rays of light like halos emanating from them. Actually, he didn't say anything about the rays of light, but I knew that that was the way it had to be.

From that evening on, I was obsessed by one desire — to see day stars. I told absolutely no one, not even my sister, Muska, that I knew about day stars and wanted to see them. I thought, First I'll go alone and see them, and then I'll tell Muska right away, and even show them, first to

Muska and then to others, and I'll say, "Look, see what I saw first!" And so, in two or three days, one cloudless, intensely hot noontime, having made sure that no one was around, I went to an old well, turned back the mossy well covers as I would a book's, and gazed into the depths.

There was not a single star in the well.

I couldn't believe it.

For a long time I watched, for a long time I breathed in the cool smell of water-swollen wood, but the stars did not appear, although from time to time the black quadrangle of water began to move in the center and wash toward the walls in little circles.

You probably can't see them the first time, I guessed. An hour or two later, tired by the heat, I went again to the well, not so impetuously, but stealthily, and carefully opened it, and again, nothing. So I watched until evening, until the first stars, which anyone can see, appeared. But, strange! My conviction that there are day stars and that there are wells on earth that catch them and reflect them did not leave me.

The years went by: the beginning of the thirties — the first Five Year Plan, those stormy, fiery nights at the electric plant where I worked; the end of the thirties — the deaths of my daughters, one after the other, then the period of trial from

*Drawing by Yudin.*

1937 to 1939, which left its indelible scars, and almost immediately thereafter, the great fatherland war. More and more things tended to pile up between me and my old life; my sorrows and joys — particularly my sorrows — were utterly unlike what seemed to me the static sorrows and joys of my family in the Neva apartment, and my ties with them, which had become weaker and weaker, were ready to snap.

I wasn't sorry about this; actually, I didn't even think about it. I rarely saw my father; the Neva apartment existed somewhere deep in my subconscious; I hardly remembered Avdotya or Grandmother or Aunt Varya. Early one October morning in 1941, when Leningrad was already surrounded by the Germans and the attack on the city was imminent, I heard Aunt Varya's voice on the telephone: "Lyalechka, come say good-bye to your grandmother."

I didn't understand. I was incredulous for the wrong reason. "Aunt Varya, how can you think of evacuating her? You know the roads are all blocked off."

"We're not evacuating her, Lyalechka; she's dying."

I almost said, "So what?" but something stopped me.

"She's dying and wants to say good-bye."

"Aunt Varya," I began to mumble in complete confusion. "The district council is having an emergency meeting of political organizers today, and as you know, I'm a political organizer." But suddenly a thought interrupted my excuses. How many years since you've seen Grandma? Over two, and she lives not far away. She's dying. And I saw her as she was in my childhood: small, always working, grumpy, kind. My grandmother. My kind, old, only grandmother.

"Aunt Varya!" I cried. "I'm coming right away. Will there be time?"

"I think so."

"I'm coming, Aunt Varya!"

I did not notice that the trolley had stopped. The conductress yelled at me angrily, "What's the matter with you? Get out!"

I looked out and saw that we were standing in front of Lenin factory. "My stop is next," I said.

"Look, are you deaf or something? It's an air raid. Get out and take shelter."

Clutching my passes in my right hand, I ran to the home where I'd been born, where my world had begun, where I had fallen in love, where I had heard the irresistible call of the Revolution. I ran to the home which I left when I was twenty years old because I despised its inhabitants for their "bourgeois backwardness," to the home which I had practically forgotten. I ran toward it as the ghastly shelling continued around me,

choking and terrified that I might not ever see it again. Oh, just once! Only once again.

The house was standing. . . .

Grandmother was lying on the pillows, wrapped like a peasant in a white shawl. Her face was completely shrunken and wrinkled. What amazed me most of all was her hands, lying on her chest. They seemed unnaturally large. The fingers were so knobbed and calloused, with such swollen blue veins. These were the hands of a woman who had worked for eighty out of her eighty-seven years, the hands of a mother who had given birth, fed, swaddled, and raised fourteen children and many grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren, and had outlived and buried many of them, closed their eyes with these hands and thrown the first handful of sand into their graves. And I? What had I done that was good for her, for Aunt Varya, for my father? Nothing. I'd never had the time — the first Five Year Plan, urgent building to be done, the mastery of Marxist theory, my own life, raising my own family; there had just never been time. I was building a new society, while my grandmother and aunt had gone on with their saints' days and all that nonsense.

My grandmother was half unconscious, looking at the wall, when I sat down near her.

"Mama," Aunt Varya called. "Lyalya has come to say good-bye."

I had walked out of the Neva gates early in the dry, golden October of 1941, utterly fearless and joyful, drunk with the knowledge of my own immortality and convinced that all things I knew then or had ever known were also immortal. But neither I nor anyone else knew that we Lenin-graders would walk these same ecstatic, glorious, brilliantly lighted roads in the other direction, and soon.

FOUR months later, I took the same road in the other direction: I went from the city toward the Neva gates. I went to my father early in February of 1942. I equipped myself before setting out. My comrades on the radio committee, where I had worked and lived for a long time, all helped as much as they could. In a measuring bottle like a baby's formula bottle, which showed up from nowhere, they poured some slightly sweet tea. Someone gave me two cigarettes, and I took my ration of bread. I decided to eat it bit by bit, and under no circumstances would I eat it at once, even if I could think of nothing but that bread lying in my gas mask — an entire 250 grams. My gas mask hung from my side, the same gas mask which our Avdotya had thought such complete protection from all the horrors of war. "You, Lyalechka, get a gas mask," she told me.

At that time, paper crosses in windows also seemed like protection. How carefully, during the summer of 1941 — was it really just seven months ago? — we taped our windows to prevent them from shattering. Some cranks outdid themselves. Thinking that tape was not enough, they cut fancy paper patterns and pictures. On Fontanka Canal, the window of one apartment was decorated with tropical palms, beneath which apes were sitting in state. Did these people, wanting to laugh off the war with jokes, think this would help?

Nothing helped. Nothing prevented death from entering our homes — not the taped windows, the ingenious patterns and pictures, not the carefully checked gas masks which we opened and put on at the first air raid signal. When we put on these masks, death didn't get us with suffocating gases; it just entered into each of us like a weakness of the flesh, like gnawing hunger, like a permanent chill.

I knew I'd have to go a long way. I had to cross the Neva and climb the right bank. From the radio committee building, this is approximately 17 kilometers. I braced myself for the trip. I was full of a strange kind of zeal and incredible calm. No, not calm, more like indifference; no, better yet, an awful gentleness and peace. I did not know if I could get to my father and decided not to look that far ahead. I decided to set myself small goals. Here I am at one lamppost. I must get to the next. Then the next. Then to the Moscow Station. From there, I'll be able to see his dispensary. I've just got to keep my legs moving. I'm not in a hurry. I must try to stay on the sidewalk and not get in the snow.

And I walked. At first, along the Neva, from one lamppost to another. From one to another.

I got as far as Moscow Station. When I looked at my watch, it had stopped.

I went on to Staro-Nevesky Street. There again I walked from lamppost to lamppost. To the left, from Moscow Station lined all the way up to Alexander Nevsky Monastery, were buses, frozen and buried under snow, like corpses. One after another in line, several dozen, just standing. And near the monastery, a line of streetcars with broken windows and piles of snow on the seats, also just standing. Probably they'll stand like that forever. It was impossible to imagine that there had been a time when they had moved, whistling and whispering against the asphalt. Had we really ridden in them? Strange thought. I was walking past the abandoned streetcars and buses in another century. I had either lived one hundred years ago or would live one hundred years hence. I didn't know which. It made no difference.

As I neared the Neva, my path was crossed by another. And as I came up to the intersection, I bumped into a woman, shivering despite many layers of shawls, pulling a coffin on a sled. Actually, it was not a coffin but something like a bureau drawer. Maybe it was a bureau drawer covered with a bit of plywood. She dragged it, her whole body straining, almost falling forward. I stopped to let the coffin pass, and she stopped to let me pass, straightening up and taking a deep breath. I started, and she jerked the sled at the same time. But she couldn't move it; the runners were probably caught in some pothole or mound in the path, and it stayed right where it was, near my feet. Staring out at me from her shawls with hatred, she hissed barely audibly, "Well, go on!"

And as I took a wide step over the coffin, I unintentionally sat down on it. She sighed and sat down beside me. "Are you coming from the city?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Been going a long time?"

"Three hours, probably."

"Is it bad there?"

"Yes."

"Are they bombing?"

"Not now. Shelling."

"Same with us. Shelling."

I opened my gas mask and got out my treasure — my beloved cigarette. As I said, I had two: one for Papa, and the other I had decided to smoke later, near Lenin factory. But I couldn't hold out, and I smoked it. She didn't take her eyes off my cigarette, and when she saw that it was smoked more than halfway, she reached out for it. There were just two puffs left for her.

Then we got up and took the sled rope and dragged the coffin over whatever had caught it. She looked at me quietly and I at her. Then I started off again toward my father. First one lamppost, then the next. The meeting with the woman, smoking with her, made no impression on me at the time. I just thought, Now I can't sit down again until the Lenin factory. Then I'll sit and have just a bit of bread.

**S**LOWLY, unconsciously, I walked on and met many more coffins and corpses, wrapped in sheets or piqué bedspreads, being carried on sleds. I saw many corpses lying in the snow with their feet in the path. Almost all the feet were bare; only those alive and walking the paths of a dead, freezing, unyielding city need overshoes.

At the Lenin factory, which used to be considered the beginning of the city, long ago when I was a child, because a horsecar ran to the factory



and a streetcar ran from there back to town; at the Lenin factory, I sat down on the concrete bench in front of the dispatcher's concrete office — built in the style of Le Corbusier, of course — and ate a little bit of bread, then continued along Shlusselburgsky Street. I did not look to the right, to Pavelsky Street, where four months ago, during the thunder of an air attack, my grandmother died solemnly and unhurriedly, blessing the four corners of the earth and praying that Moscow be saved. I did not look at the crossroads, where my father and I had stood under silvery, Biblical clouds and had hurriedly talked about my husband, Nikolai, of his work on *Lermontov* and *Mayakovsky*, of poetry, of the future. I had no feelings then, no human reactions.

I stopped only when I got to the Neva, to the crossover to my father's factory. The first tender lilac shades of night were falling. A smoky rosy-lilac, the snow-covered Neva seemed an immense, terrible waste. From here was the longest stretch, although I could see the factory across the Neva and knew that just to the left of the main building was the old wooden dispensary.

In my gas mask there was still about 100 grams of bread, and I thought a mug of boiling water could be found at my father's and we could divide the bread and eat it. As soon as I arrive, we'll eat. This thought gave me strength, and I crossed the Neva.

Soon now, but oh, God, it's far!

The narrow path across the Neva was hard and trampled down by unsteady footsteps. There were ribbed patches where someone had stumbled. The right bank was icy and unapproachable, and its top was lost in the rosy twilight. At the foot of the hill, women so muffled in shawls that they did not resemble human beings were getting water out of ice holes.

I'm not going to break down, I thought dully, feeling that my whole horrible trip had been in vain. But when I went up close to the rise, I suddenly saw steps, barely hacked out of the ice.

A woman oddly like the woman with the coffin, in the same sort of shawls and with the same brown-paper face, came up to me. She was carrying a pail filled with a couple of quarts of water, which kept slopping, in her right hand. "Are we going up, my friend?" she asked.

"We are."

And on all fours, side by side, keeping close together, holding on to each other's shoulders, we crept up, clutching the next step in the ice, hauling our feet up after us, step by step, stopping every three or four steps.

"The doctor chopped out these steps," said the woman, catching her breath on our fourth stop. "God bless him — it's easier — to get water."

I didn't even think that she might be talking about my father.

The second half of the climb, we took turns carrying the pail until we got to the top and reached the factory gates. The factory yard, the wooden dispensary, the little garden with its carved rose trellis where Father had tended his roses for so many years — I recognized none of this, absolutely nothing, and I stood for a long time in front of the dispensary porch, wondering where I was. What was this strange little wooden hut, this half-torn-down trellis? I thought I'd never seen them before.

Looking around, I calmly noticed that even inanimate things — a building, a trellis, a snow bank — can die. Everything was dead, or perhaps in the other world, because while everything was superficially the same, the soul was gone. In the silent, empty, hoary forest, even in the snowy wastes of the steppes, there is life and soul, but here there wasn't. There was nothing whatsoever alive.

IN THE small vestibule of the dispensary, barely lit by the next room, on a wooden bench lay a woman. She was wearing a quilted jacket, was carefully muffled in a shawl, and lay on her side with her palms supporting her cheek in the way that those awaiting connections for distant places in railroad stations sleep. But she wasn't sleeping. She was dead. I saw that the minute I walked in.

That's probably a common sight around here, I thought, going into the next room, and there, at a desk, behind a wooden railing with fat spokes, sat my father.

A low, thick candle lit his face from beneath. His face was so swollen that, even in the candle-light, you could see its greenish-blue hue. But the hair on his temples and at the back of his neck, the light-gray hair of a blond, was still stiff and curly, and his eyes seemed, in the flickering candlelight, especially large and blue.

I stood silently outside the wooden railing in front of my father. He lifted his swollen face, looked me up and down intently, and then courteously asked, "Whom do you want, citizeness?"

I heard myself, for some reason, answer woodenly, "I want to see Doctor Bergolts."

"I am he. What's the trouble?"

I looked at him and was silent. It wasn't pity, nor fear, nor anything natural, but something that I can't define even now which seized me, something dead and unfeeling. He repeated compassionately, "What's the trouble?"

"Papa," I managed to say. "It's me — Lyalya!"

He was silent for what seemed a long time but

probably was only several seconds. He then came from behind the railing, stood in front of me, and lowering his head, silently kissed my hand. He understood why I had come. He knew that Nikolai had been in the hospital. Then, raising his head with a jerk, sternly, as if dismissing something, he looked at me and said softly, "Come, little girl, we have some hot water. Maybe we'll even put together something to eat!" And he added, laughing a little, "Perhaps some canned soup."

He had loved Nikolai very much, but neither of us said anything about him or mentioned his death.

We went into the small, badly lighted dispensary kitchen. The candle that Papa had carried with him was extinguished. It was valuable state property, and Papa used it only to receive people.

Two women with robes on over their quilted jackets — one short and dark-eyed, the other very tall with features sharply outlined by emaciation — clasped their hands when they saw me. "Lyalechka!" the short, dark-eyed one fairly sang. "How you've grown!"

"That's Matryosha," Papa said. "Don't you recognize her? Matryosha, the very best of nurses. And this is Alexandra Ivanovna. Don't you remember her either?"

"Papa, you know, it is five years since I've been here."

"I guess so," he burst out, and then softly clapped his hands. "Well, now, my good women, where are our riches? Give my daughter and me some boiling water."

Matryosha began to bang away at the little stove and to cook something in a frying pan. A repulsive smell filled the tiny kitchen. I guessed that it was some kind of artificial cooking fat. It smelled loathsome. I took off my scarf, coat, knitted hat, and the kerchief underneath. "It's so hot in here, Papa."

"Hot!" Matryosha caught that one. "We're burning up the trellis for this heat. Never mind, you've got to keep warm, right?"

"Right."

"Lyalechka!" she exclaimed. "Maybe you want to wash? Down to the waist, maybe? And your feet. I'll get some water."

But I remembered the icy, nearly perpendicular steps which I had just crawled up and quickly shook my head. "No, no, no, I'm not dirty. We look after ourselves on the radio committee. There are no lice in our rooms. We get our water from the basement, the former boiler room. It's a weird alkaline water that spurts out of a broken pipe in the morning, but we have hot water too. No, we look after ourselves. We even make the

women use just a little lipstick. And we look in the mirror so that we'll have no dirt in our nostrils, eyes, or ears. You know, if a housewife doesn't look in the mirror, that means the mirrors are covered, and that means there's death in the house. So we make our women look in the mirror and take care of themselves."

A painful garrulousness had come over me. I had been very quiet of late, and here in the warmth of the stove and of the people around me, I became intoxicated. I was suddenly drowsy, but at the same time I wanted to talk, talk about anything.

I got out the remainder of my cigarette ration. My father sighed with delight. "Oh, yes," he said, reverently taking the cigarette with his large, intelligent surgeon's hands. "You muzhiks certainly live well."

The strange and smelly thing in the frying pan was put on the table. Accurately as druggists, we divided my slice of bread in four, poured out four mugs of boiling water, and very, very gently sat down at the little table which was so crowded that we bumped each other unintentionally, as on an overcrowded train. The lighted wick floating in fat which served as a lamp flickered and cast our freakish and frightful shadows from side to side of the little room and heightened the impression that we were traveling by train to some distant point. And that woman in the vestibule was just waiting. . . .

THAT evening, when I lay down to sleep in Papa's dispensary, he sat next to me and rubbed my hands and forehead as he had done in my childhood when I had measles or grippe. And I somehow remembered Pavelsky Street. "Papa, how are things on Pavelsky Street? How is Aunt Varya? Avdotya?"

He was silent for a long time, watching the candle. "They starved to death. Aunt Varya on the way to the hospital. Avdotya while on watch at her factory. The house was shelled."

"You mean no one lives there?"

"No, no one. There are just snow banks there now."

He was silent, and so was I. And, distinctly and clearly, I suddenly heard how Avdotya used to sing, "My beloved native land." Her voice was always thin and cracked when she sang this line, and her tears always prevented her from going on. Avdotya, dead, not singing her wonderful tearful song. And Aunt Varya died on the way to the hospital, along the very same way I had come that day. Everything was frozen silver with snow; our departed ones and the half-destroyed

home were covered with snow. Snow was spreading all over Russia; snow, snow and sorrow, as mute and endless as mine. Slowly, slowly, pain — and life, although I didn't know it then — enveloped my soul.

"Papa," I said aloud. "I don't think I'm still alive."

"Nonsense," he said angrily. "You're alive. If you weren't, you would not have come here."

"No, you're wrong. I don't want to live. I just don't care about living."

"Foolish girl." His answer was slow and tender. "I want to live very much. You know what? I've become a collector."

"What do you collect?"

He began to laugh. "Anything silly. Perhaps it is a psychosis. I collect everything I can — post cards, buttons, rose seeds."

"Buttons? What for?"

Sitting behind the candle in the shadows, he seemed timeless, a part of the future or the past, I didn't know which. Looking at me with his unbelievably blue eyes, he confessed: "You know, maybe it's an ugly thing, especially here in Leningrad, but a great thirst for life has come over me. An unthinking thirst like first love. No, it's not thirst exactly, but greed. Yes, that's it, greed. There's so much I want to preserve and save and hold in my arms. Everything on earth, buttons, post cards, rose seeds. I'd keep everything just to keep it from disappearing, down to the last button."

He looked at me so trustingly, despite his knowledge of the foolishness, the monstrous insanity of our time, and then enthusiastically, conspiratorially went on: "You know, they have promised to send me some special rose seeds. They're called 'The Earth's Glory.' These are tremendous, slow-growing roses, golden, with just a touch of orange on the edge. They grow in the south generally, and not everywhere, but I'm going to grow them here, next to the dispensary. It's too bad that Matryosha had to burn the trellis this winter, but we'll put a new one together. I'll plant the roses in the spring, and by summer they'll have blossomed. Will you come to see them? What do you think? Think they'll be nice?"

"Nice," I replied. To my amazement I felt something stir next to the pain that was in my heart.

Maybe because Matryosha washed my feet like a mother or older sister, or because Papa was now talking about roses called The Earth's Glory and how I would come to see them (Do you mean that the streetcars will run again?) — maybe for these reasons and for many more unrealized ones, I felt suddenly a great peace. This feeling was somewhat akin to pride, but it wasn't pride. I

repeat, I understand only *now* that this was my return to life. My father is right, of course, I thought. I am alive, I can walk, I got to him. Damn it! Don't listen to yourself. Do everything you can. Heavens! You have two things to be done, in the city and at the radio station, and they have to be done properly. Now I'll sleep, but tomorrow, or at the latest the day after, I'll go to the radio committee and get to work. It's better to die on the job. But I won't die. I'll live in spite of everything that has happened to me and to "My beloved native land." It is alive and will live. But now we'll sleep. Both of us. We're tired. It's night, and we'll sleep.

"Papa, I think I'll sleep tonight," I said. "Better put out the state's candle."

He put his great doctor's hand on my face, and I kissed it as I used to in my childhood.

"Go to sleep," he said. "That's better. But this summer you'll see in my garden Earth's Glory roses."

He got up, and before putting out the candle, he circled the yellow flame with his hands and showed how tremendous the roses would be and how they would blossom. "Look, like this — huge, golden," he said, his hands fluttering. "They can grow to this height. All right?"

I looked at his hands: luminous, translucent, they somehow shed an almost blinding golden-red light:

the hands of a Russian doctor, a surgeon's hands, which had saved thousands upon thousands of soldier and civilian lives, which had hacked steps out of the ice, and which were now actually like some huge unheard-of flower;

hands as wonderful as my grandmother's, cast-iron, twisted, darkly veined, and calloused hands which had, during an air raid, blessed me and our whole country;

hands as powerful and gentle as Matryosha's; hands as large and intelligent and fearless as those of an old miner;

hands shedding light and power, knowing and transmitting the secret of the land to the future, working hands — the highest, original, eternal earth's glory.

Yes, I'll see Papa's roses this summer, I thought simply, as simply as my father's words had been spoken.

**I**T WAS with a feeling of peaceful certainty that I went back to town on the second morning by the same route I had taken two days earlier. I knew then that I would live. I had to live and work because people needed my work and I knew



it. I felt neither pride nor happiness in this knowledge. I just went and acted. I was thinking over my forthcoming broadcasts and mumbling some lines of verse which suddenly came into my head which I would absolutely have to write down for Red Army Day — also radio committee business.

I knew what they would be about: about contemporary Leningrad, about myself as a Lenin-grader, about what was most important for us after eight months of war, about our feelings and struggles, about a hungry, bereft, dying people who loved life and would therefore win without fail.

Now, when I think over these three walks — first away from the Neva gates, then toward Neva, and finally my return to town — I think of a piece of Indian wisdom which I read in a statement made by Ivan Bunin after our victory.

Indian wisdom has it that a man must take two trips in his life: the departure and the return. On the departure, man and his single life are bounded by his individuality; he lives mainly for himself, by his self-interest, by a simple desire for acquisition, a desire to take — for himself, for his tribe, for his nation. On the return trip, the barriers between the individual and the social “I” are gone, the desire to take is lost, and in its place is the desire to give back what has been taken from nature, from mankind, from the earth. And so man’s life and knowledge are united in one life, a single “I,” and so begins the genuine spiritual existence.

I have put down this piece of wisdom only approximately, and it cannot be made to fit anyone’s life exactly. But it seems to me that that dizzying, frightening trip away from the Neva gates in October of 1941, regardless of all my feelings of solidarity with society, was still a part of my departure, but the trip from my father’s, when my greatest desire was to give back as much as possible of what was necessary for my countrymen, for their strength of action and work — this was probably the beginning of my return trip.

No, the desire to take, even from the past, hasn’t died within me, but the desire to give back is stronger. To give back not only what I took, but to give it back transformed by its progress through my soul, give it back in its essence.

Of this I spoke at the beginning, in telling about the day stars, and with this I will end. Reading this, some could say, “Now, really, you promised to show us day stars. Where are they?”

And I will answer, I opened my soul for you, like a covered well, with all its darkness and light. Look into it, and if you should see a bit of yourself, or a part of your journey, then you have seen day stars.

*Translated by Gabriella Azrael.*

## THREE POEMS

BY STEPAN SHCHIPACHEV

*Stepan Shchipachev, who was born in 1899, is a well-known Soviet lyric poet, winner of his country’s highest literary prize. He headed the delegation of Soviet writers in their visit to the United States last March.*

Agreed that I shall die and that I must  
Turn, as time passes, to a little dust.

A barefoot girl will cross the field, and I  
Will stir, beyond corruption, and will seize  
Tenderly with hot dust those feet of hers  
That smell of daisies to her very knees.

A gust of supple wind springs up,  
Tousles her hair until it flies,  
Then closely drapes her dress across  
Her almost girlish breasts, her thighs.

Beyond the foaming foliage  
Of plum and apple tree she stands —  
Surely the wind knows what it is  
To have a sculptor’s happy hands.

Free my line must be and rise in celebration  
Of the cosmos’ icy cold, for where  
Planets fly and starry dust is blindly drifting,  
The terrestrial sphere revolves in air,  
For, enclosed within the quiet, azure radiance,  
From as far as Mars there may be scanned,  
Faintly drawn upon earth’s vaguely looming  
surface,  
The dim outlines of the Soviet land.  
Washed by ocean waters, it has lifted mountains  
To the stars; I praise it as I must:  
Precious to me is the merest hoofprint on it,  
And its roads, I love their very dust.

*Translated by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky.*

# THE EASTER OUTING

BY

LEONID LEONOV



India ink drawing by Vereisky.

Leonid Leonov's novel *THE THIEF*, which appeared in 1927, is a panoramic story of the Moscow underworld in the early twenties. The central figure is Mitya Vekshin, a former aristocrat, then a Bolshevik, and finally, out of his disillusionment with the Revolution, the leader of a gang of thieves. Opposed to him is Nikolai Zavarikhin, a shrewd, inexperienced peasant who has come to Moscow to make his fortune, legally or otherwise, and who falls in love with Mitya's sister, Tanya. Tanya, a high-wire artist in the circus whose stage name is Hela, lives with her trainer, Pugel.

With its unsparing portraits of back-alley Moscow, the overcrowded apartments, the shabby splendor of circus life, the robberies, the brawls, the novel touched off critical controversy within the Soviet Union, but there was general agreement that Leonov was a writer in the great tradition and that his talent was reminiscent of Dostoevsky's.

In his subsequent plays and novels, Leonov has established himself in the front rank of contemporary Russian authors. Six of his novels have been translated into English, and in 1957 he was the first of the Soviet writers to be honored with the Lenin Prize of 75,000 rubles for his novel *THE RUSSIAN FOREST*. Since then he has been revising and expanding *THE THIEF*. The 1959 edition resembles the original edition of 1927 in its fundamental concern for politics and in its intense interest in the psychology and pathology of its characters, and, naturally, it reflects the maturing subtlety and skill of the writer. The excerpt which follows was selected for us by the author. It was freshly written, and this is its first appearance in English.

ZAVARIKHIN came clattering downstairs after Tanya, who had been waiting at the entrance for some time, holding her hat against the wind, which flattened her clothes to her figure.

"Hold fast to the wall so you won't be blown away, Nikolai Zavarikhin," she shouted at him. "The world is windy, and wonderful."

"Back at home is where the wind is really free," Nikolai responded as he took a gulp of air. "Why, there the wind is so strong that the old women have to beat their way through it in order to get to the well. I remember the time when an accordion in the next district would start to play and the wind would simply tear it to shreds. That's how it is at home!"

"And do you play the accordion too?"

"I used to sometimes on the farm, but I've lost the talent. Now I have to use my mind." He turned around, thinking over various plans for the outing. "I have a great friend, a relative, a brother-in-law, sort of, a future godfather," Zavarikhin blurted out prophetically, practically chewing her ear, because the noise of the wind in the roof tops drowned out human speech. "Let's go see him first."

"Why?" She was suspicious of his enthusiasm.

"Listen, circus artist Hela, you can always depend on the huckster Nikolka Zavarikhin."

And his glance was so persuasive that Tanya delivered herself up to his will without argument.

Hand in hand they set out, their arms swinging as they walked. Midway, Nikolka fell into a pre-occupied silence, either out of worry over his vanishing bachelor freedom or over whether or not he would catch Zotei Bukhvostov at home. They had to cross a square, emptied of people by the Easter holiday, and eventually they turned right behind an ancient fire tower into a dead-end street. His friend's place of business stood in the depths of an unpaved courtyard, surrounded by alive but barren poplars. Telling Tanya to wait a minute for him, Zavarikhin poured some sunflower seeds into the palm of her hand and then ran through the stone gates, scarred by carriage wheels, and disappeared into the reception building as swiftly as if he had gone through the wall.

LOW-LYING buildings set in a semicircle like that were, in the past, the riding stables of some rich Moscovite. After a moment or so, Tanya decided to get some sun by strolling among the wooden houses interspersed between the gates and the splendid old fire tower. As the wind swept through the place, Tanya's holiday mood began to run out faster than her sunflower seeds. A bald-headed man in suspenders appeared from behind the lace curtains of a street-level window; at first he just picked his teeth as he looked at her, or rather at her knees, which were revealed by the wind. Then he pointed a crooked finger at a bottle; this was evidently an invitation to share his company. But Tanya strolled into the yard, around the reception building, and, removing a hand-tooled harness from a bench, sat down on the back porch. It was a grim, deserted stretch in front of her. Stacks of delivery sleds were piled in one spot, and a huge pool of a purplish hue rippling in the wind took up an entire corner of the yard. No one noticed or called out to Tanya; the sun was warm on her legs, and the piles of manure steaming in the sun made her think of horses and the open road. She would have gladly sat there until evening if she had not been haunted by the memory of the sorrowful, sympathetic eyes of Pugel.

Through an open *fortochka* the heartbreaking sound of a baby's crying reached her, then some kitchen sounds mingled with indistinct human speech. Tanya listened. An unfamiliar voice, husky from the strain of talking, was trying to convince some listener of the power of the bribe in Holy Russia and was citing as proof an experience of his own brother-in-law. It appeared that the brother-in-law, having rammed and sunk a bread barge, had bribed his way out of paying the huge indemnity in the insurance investigation that followed.

"O.K., Zotei Vasilich, you can save all that. They'll never get me either!" said a voice which sounded like Zavarikhin's. "No more for me, thanks. I've had enough."

"Getting tight already, on one glass!" laughingly burst out the first voice, which was interrupted by a hiccup. "Listen to me, Kolya, I'm going to give you a scientific example. My pilot was called to court. 'You dog, how was it that you let a boat in perfectly good repair go to the bottom?' 'Well, it was like this, this wave came rushing over the water, so small I could barely see it. . . .' And meanwhile he's pushing this brand-new hundred-ruble note into the fist."

"O.K., that's enough, more later." The second voice was determined this time, and now Tanya could unmistakably recognize Nikolka's deep bass. "There is a storyteller wandering around here — save your story for him. I don't need it. Here's what I do need. I need a good horse for the day."

"You're smuggling goods, Kolya? On Holy Jesus' Sunday?"

"Not goods, Zotei Vasilich. There's a certain girl I'd like to give a good time to. A time she'll remember forever. Graybeard, lend me that new fine mare of yours."

"Oh, no," the other began to groan. "She's still unshod."

"Save the lectures, Zotei, and you'll save money," answered Zavarikhin in a none too conciliatory tone, and Tanya heard for the first time how hard and brittle ordinary human speech can become. "Get up, let's go harness the horse before my beauty freezes from overexposure."

"So you're going to drive while you're drunk, you devil! And what will you do if I don't give you my filly?" Bukhvostov began to bustle about, and here Zavarikhin made some answer which Tanya could not hear. "Now don't get angry at your elders, gentle Kolya, you've gotten terribly angry."

"You can't get angry at human garbage," was the curt reply, and again Tanya could not make out the end of the sentence.

The voices died out but were heard again as the host, who had evidently made peace with his guest, led the way to the stables behind the reception building.

"And I might have known that you wanted to show off in front of a young lady," said the man with the much disheveled, reddish beard, as he tried to keep up with Zavarikhin, who stalked ahead, not deigning to answer. "We understand so little. Love isn't a person — you can't kick it out of the apartment. Will you at least be back by dark?"

"Enough of that stuff, Zotei. I'm fed up with



it. I've said that I won't take your precious animal off the road. Now bring her out!"

Soon a two-seated racing carriage with rubber tires appeared from the stable, and behind it, from a separate stall, emerged the filly herself. Sullenly restraining the prancing horse, and himself chafing with helpless jealousy, Bukhvostov began to harness the beautiful bay. Tanya had time, as she approached the proud and graceful creature, to appreciate those features which strike even the uninitiated; unlike her overfed and corseted circus sisters, this filly possessed a wild, untamed restiveness. Her satiny coat rippled slightly, like running water in the wind, and the special play of every fiber and muscle could be seen. Pushing the owner aside with the end of a poplar branch which he had broken off, God knows when, Zavarikhin with his deep-black eyes invited Tanya to get in beside him. And suddenly she became afraid of that cruel tenderness in Zavarikhin's dutiful yet dominating glance, so afraid that at any other time she undoubtedly would have run away, but now she was indifferent to what the future held. At home alone with Pugel and her own thoughts — nothing could be worse.

"Don't be reckless, Nikolai Yegorich," Bukhvostov pleaded with his inexorable friend. His voice was barely audible, and there was a note of hatred in his appeal. "Don't ruin her; don't cripple her!" He was thinking of the common injury when an inexperienced horse, on an abrupt turn, would break its own metatarsus with its hoof. "Throw away your switch — you could ruin that animal."

"Get out of the way," Zavarikhin grunted, as he guided the carriage from the yard.

The carriage bumped over the pothole between the gates, a second time the wheels splashed through the puddle, and then Zavarikhin tapped the horse with the tip of the switch to let the creature know whom she was taking and where. He lightly touched her on a sensitive place on the flank, and she shuddered, actually stopped for a second, but didn't upset the carriage or run away, because she understood that the driver was intoxicated and for the moment would be merciless to anyone on earth, himself above all. In two steps she had taken Bukhvostov's carriage out of the side street into the broad expanse of holiday silence. In the whole town there was no sound except those of the clicking hoofs and the soft whisper of the rubber tires. Tanya timidly snuggled up in Nikolka's tarpaulin and was seized by that blissful indifference to everything — the beginning, according to her long-held belief, of true happiness.

Never before had she so enjoyed riding with or even being near a man, all the while feeling his

sharp, uncomfortable elbow in her side. Her pleasure in being with him doubled as passers-by appeared on either side, as she experienced satisfaction in the sting of the wind in her face, as she sensed the blessedly enigmatic unknown lying ahead and felt more than anything the inexorable power of this beautiful horse who, with such playful ease and effortlessness, was carrying her forward to her fate.

"Why is that heavy, unpleasant red-haired man so afraid of you?" Tanya asked suddenly, because she wanted to penetrate the thoughts of the one sitting beside her.

"Zotei Vasilich? Well, how can I put it? People are most afraid of those who don't spare themselves," answered Zavarikhin, skillfully playing with the reins, which were wrapped around his hand. "But they have nothing on him. Between us, he fell victim to czarist wrath, and his name got on the books. Well, there's no red tape during the war — you just line 'em up to the wall! But old Zotei is so full of life that even after he was already lying in the pit, he survived, the bastard. I can't imagine how. So then he put all his faith in horses, although he was just an amateur. Oh, it's a great gift. Horses have been a passion for me since my childhood."

They came out on a wide cobblestone square, completely empty, without even a policeman in the center.

"I have a brother who adores horses," Tanya said, trying to strengthen their friendship and mutual trust, and she blushed.

"What did you say?" Zavarikhin couldn't hear because of the wind.

"I said my brother served in the cavalry," Tanya repeated louder, cupping her mouth with her hand. "Maybe you remember meeting him?"

"Sure." Zavarikhin's laugh was restrained. "We had a little scrap once. Oh, well, meetings with knives in hand aren't entirely without value. They help you see the whole man."

"I don't understand." Tanya shivered and moved away slightly.

"Because human nature is always there to be seen. When you are a little boy, you choose your friends only with your fists. And you're never mistaken."

THE horse was going by herself, at a walk. Zavarikhin started to recall stories from his former life in the northern provinces, pictures of his earliest childhood which were still fresh and bright in his memory; about unbridled drinking bouts which used up the last kopeck, about the wood cutting in the forests, the intolerable labor on the log rafts, the work in the fields. Actually, Nikol-

ka's early memories were not so wild and attractive as he would have had them, but he felt a strange urge to embellish the passing charms of a peasant's life in the eyes of this woman. He was conscious every moment of Tanya's sidelong, inquiring gaze, which aroused flashes of boldness in him but at the same time made him unusually shy. Probably it was his effort to overcome this shyness which expressed itself in an action which, under other circumstances, he would have condemned.

Carried away not so much by Zavarikhin's stories as by his tension and nervousness, Tanya did not notice how the occasion arose for his ugly display of bravado. Zavarikhin, a peasant boy come into his own, dealt with his victim as he deemed all remnants of the former day and regime deserved. But Tanya's heart contracted in pity for these same survivors, for their defenseless poverty: the torn shoulder of the cabman's caftan with its gaudy patches and the battered droshky with its cracked, varnished leather.

It turned out that Zavarikhin's plaything was to be a cabman of approximately Pugel's height, and during the entire duration of their mindlessly unfair chase, there was not one droshky driver who defended him. From the looks of him, he was not too far gone: he probably still supported himself on his usual income, probably fed himself and his old lady with the money his gelding brought in, paid the assessment tax as other self-employed people did, came hopefully to the cabstand every morning on the off-chance that the wave of strolling humanity would somehow catch him up and be kind to him. And so he had reached the final stages of detachment from humanity and had shriveled to the point where one snap of the fingers would knock the life out of him.

The two of them, the cabdriver and his downcast breadwinner, were peacefully dozing while waiting for a fare when Nikolka, coming alongside them, inspired by something crazy and inexplicable, gave the gelding a backhanded lash with his whip. He no more justified this action to Tanya than children justify playing peg top on the floor. The blow was so unexpected that the poor old nag shuddered and staggered backward as it tried to right itself, and the owner just barely missed falling out of the box as he held on to the reins. It was all so comical that, despite her pity and natural indignation, Tanya could not resist laughing, which Zavarikhin took as approval of the fun he had invented.

"It's time to get your beast on his feet, Pop," Zavarikhin spat out as he rode past, and this time he used the whip with all his might. "They drag any kind of carrion onto the streets — on a holy-day, too. People have no conscience!"

And there was such humiliating disdain, a disdain more bitter than death, in Zavarikhin's tone at that moment that no being on earth could have forgiven him. The old man, aroused, started to cajole and pull at his gelding, who looked back, it seemed to Tanya, reproachfully at his master. Then the driver, standing and cursing, began to pursue his assailant. The poor man's supply of swearwords was evidently not enough for the situation and it quickly ran out after his extravagant expenditure, and repetition reduced the force and freshness of what he had to say. The old man tried to get at his tormentor with a delapidated, harmless whip, with no success whatsoever. Bukhvostov's elusive carriage was running a length and a half ahead of the junky heap, and his sleek trotter was expending only a limited amount of energy. A flick of the reins and the pursuit would have been over, but Zavarikhin slowed down and amused himself by shortening the distance between them.

"Stop it, Nikolai! Leave them alone, Zavarikhin, they're so old," Tanya begged, but knew, even as she reached for his hand, that it was useless.

"Never mind, Hela, let the little things get hot. Fury warms more quickly than vodka. But notice the stubbornness of the Russian: Do it even if it kills you." Zavarikhin spat out every word. "And anyway, where's he racing that innocent animal to? Can you really compare him to our she-devil? I bet they haven't treated that poor animal to oats since he was young. My sweet Hela, they have ruined him on too much work and trashy hay. Moscow hay is ghastly stuff. Trampled, spoiled, unsatisfying. A barnyard bull would turn away with disgust from that hay!" And he hit at random the wheezing horse behind him.

"Bad! You're bad, bad," Tanya sobbed. "Stop. Let me out."

"Ah, you're making a mistake, Hela. You know perfectly well that he would beat you to death if he caught you," Zavarikhin said sadly and reasonably. "Really, in my home life I'm not such a tough customer. How else could I have survived this business? If you only knew how many times they have beaten old Nikolka Zavarikhin about his head, or the times specialists have taken the spirit out of him with pliers, you'd praise, you'd even reward me for my perseverance. No, Hela, I'm not sorry — that's life!"

AND now the wide suburban thoroughfare had given way to crowded city streets. Citizens dressed up in their best were out strolling in honor of the holiday in family groups, some with their grandmothers, others pushing baby carriages in front of

them. Suddenly everything was deathly quiet; the crying and the laughing of children were hushed by the sight of the queer chase. But regardless of the mounting excitement, regardless of the free spectacle of the brightly spinning spokes of the lacquered carriages, of this lord of life, in a cap, of the young lady in her wildly blown veil, the street was quickly able to ascertain the meanness of the fun that was taking place; with such accuracy and dry disgust simple people contemplate executions, blasphemy, and other lowly sins. Bukhvostov's bay beauty was going at a classic trot, as if she had developed a taste for this mock competition, and after her came the misery of the earth, spirit spent, roaring and swearing with sounds like sobs. The old man was standing up, tears of bitterness running down his face, beating the remaining bit of strength out of his shaggy-legged gelding, still trying to catch his enemy and bring him down. It was Zavarikhin's insidious game to keep the race going.

It was pointless to plead with him for mercy. Sitting down again and putting her hat onto the floor, Tanya looked back spiritlessly. Although Zavarikhin's rough shoulder scratched her chin, she didn't notice. And although her silence signified surrender, a promise not to oppose his will for anything, Zavarikhin still kept up his game to show his companion what exceptional entertainment physical force can provide. And so this was the last that Tanya saw of the race. She had watched the straining horse during the whole race, had seen his muzzle and harness become covered with lather and seen that his front legs were weakening. The creature was still being lashed with the whip; his hoofs were pounding; he was trying to carry himself on his back legs. Then Tanya covered her face so tightly with her hands that she could hardly breathe.

As always, the crowd gathered slowly. Some shook their fists energetically to express their innate hatred of the excesses of the upper classes, while others, on both sides of the street, forgetting relaxation and their best clothes, started chasing after Zavarikhin, who had stopped his carriage to tease and to sneer and to wait for the last of them. Torturous seconds of fear passed; the filly's legs trembled slightly and her graceful body strained forward. A circle of spectators closed in, but suddenly calling to his companion to hang on, Zavarikhin lashed his horse again with the switch.

The human noose broke, and the little horse took the seemingly weightless carriage through the gap. Someone jumped on the running board of a passing lorry which tore along after them for a while, but evidently the driver didn't know the way, and while the pursuers wrangled, the distance between them grew. After turning onto a

parallel street which led back to a suburban highway, Zavarikhin reversed his direction at the crossroads. There, with the street incident and the hootings of the chase behind them, Tanya's fear of the future also left her. Oh, in the last analysis she was more worn-out from herself than from the adventure, and an instinct of boundless submission was already drawing her toward Zavarikhin's shoulder. A rooster flew out from under the wheels, dogs barked around them, and then there was nothing except the little-traveled road and a limpid, ominous silence. They were alone together under the open sky.

"Oh, these hills and ravines," Nikolka sighed like a coachman, letting go of the reins, as the road was now completely deserted. "Oh, these dark forests," he repeated even more dejectedly.

THE country road led into a low wood pervaded by a tenacious clammy chill. Nature's green enfolded them but still could not hide a gravestone in the ground. The horse went at a walk, cooling off and leaving behind a track of ribbed rubber. As they slowly passed a little grove of trees, Zavarikhin was silent, distractedly following his thoughts. A pressing desire sprang up in him: to tie the horse to a bush and wander for a while in this place with this young girl of his. Soon they came upon a likely spot. They tied the horse and went down a small embankment. However, it turned out that the nearest cozy spot in the field was occupied. Blown by the May breeze, blissfully stretched out in dry grass, was a slightly drunken hunter. His carefully placed hunting gear could be seen on the mound, and there in a cage, their crooked beaks wired tight, were two suffering birds.

Going up to the sleeping man, Zavarikhin shook his head, kicked the empty bottle, and bending over, without a word, he released the prisoners.

"Why kill innocent creatures? Let them fly around in freedom."

"Do you think he'll catch cold?" Tanya asked anxiously.

"At this time of year, he'll undoubtedly die. Let's get out of here!" Zavarikhin burst out suddenly, and he muttered for a long time on the way back to the road and the horse. "No, I don't like little people. Their aim is to get the crust out of your mouth, and they'll fall all over themselves to spoil your pleasure. Let's go, Hela. Maybe we can find ourselves a lonely, secluded spot."

A third of a mile further on, the forest became denser with welcoming leafy canopies and hillocks bursting into bloom. A hundred feet from the road Zavarikhin was finally lucky and found a grassy spot for them. Tying the horse to a birch,



he shot a tentative, sideways glance at Tanya; she looked around, then down, and asked, in a tone mixed with curiosity and alarm, what were those birds, such sweet things, which Nikolka had released — weren't they siskins? She really knew nothing about siskins and couldn't have distinguished them from sparrows, and only asked about them to mask her embarrassment. Zavarikhin explained that the color of siskins was more yellowish, that they loved high places, and that the ones in the cage had been ordinary crossbills.

"You felt sorry for those things just now?" asked Tanya, trying to convince herself of something which she didn't quite understand.

"Are you talking about those birds? Why not feel sorry for them? Their lives are freer than ours. Why waste perfectly good birds?"

It seemed to Tanya that he was being purposely crude in order not to forget his plan, but she wanted to believe in something more than what was inevitably going to happen. She tried again to ask more exactly, but she suddenly forgot what it was she wanted to ask this frightening, strange, and somehow attractive man. Then, not lowering his dark eyes, Zavarikhin reached for Tanya's hand, squeezed her wrist hard, and half kiddingly suggested that they go see what gifts spring had in store. "It'll be quieter up there ahead," he added in a voice not quite his own, almost as if he had caught a cold, although the wind had died down and the sky was covered over with a warm haze.

TANYA felt like asking him to slow down, so that it would be something different for them, but it was too late. It happened with a commonplace simplicity which frightened Tanya. Afterward Zavarikhin sat, as they all sit, with his chin on his knees, picking his teeth with a twig, while Tanya was still half lying on his tarpaulin, looking at the catkins on a nut tree. They were growing brown and starting to fill the air with a dust which covered her face. Directly in front of her stretched the Moscow plains, with their hollows carved out by copses against the disappearing horizon. Bathed by the wind, the environs could be seen with tedious clarity, as if there were nothing more to be said about them, or about Tanya's life, for that matter. A thin ray of sun, not the last ray actually, but at least its premonition, filtered down from above, and Tanya saw, thanks to its accuracy, that right near her head was a little blue flower, barely risen, cold, ruffled from sleep. Tanya's sight was good enough to perceive that there was just one flower: a wedding gift from spring which fully corresponded to the extent of Tanya's happiness.

Then she felt a deathly chill in her shoulders

from the touch of the still-frozen earth. Shuddering, Tanya sat up and busily began to fix her hair, fumbling around underneath her for the hairpins which had fallen out.

She was frightened most of all by Zavarikhin's silence; then she made up her mind to speak. "You were just a little bit drunk, huh, Nikolushka? Back there I heard from the porch how you were clinking glasses with that man. I understand — it's a holiday. But you won't drink that much with me, will you? It won't happen again, will it? Promise me, Nikolushka."

"What's that?" asked Zavarikhin, displeased, spitting out a chewed piece of grass.

"It's that you'll never do to me what you did to him, that miserable nag a while back!" Tanya reminded him barely audibly, and so he wouldn't get angry, she quickly and awkwardly started to kiss his chapped neck. "If you could have seen, Nikolushka, how merciless your face became when you beat him —"

It seemed as though the very absurdity of her comparison troubled his unclean conscience. "That was totally different, Hela, a game. What reason would I have to beat you? I'll beat someone else in your place."

Tanya gratefully and timidly caressed his hand. "Then tell me something, Nikolai Zavarikhin. Completely honestly, or else I'll hold it against you. Tell me," she went on sternly, nervously, "do you actually like me? Just a little bit?"

"Of course," he responded with conviction, but without much passion. "You are for me the most beautiful thing on earth — almost. That time in the circus when you started to climb up to the top, my heart stopped, I was so scared — and I don't know what else. And I cried from my soul that I didn't know how to get you. Believe me, Hela, ask me to prove myself and I'd bring you a horse on my shoulders."

"How, how am I beautiful to you?" Tanya asked hurriedly before the subject grew cold; she hoped very much that they would talk about love just a little bit.

"How can I tell you, Hela? Well, you're like the black swan." (A week earlier there had been that charming occasion when he and his friends had had the chance to admire the black swan in the zoo.)

Tanya burst out laughing frankly. "I don't know what I look like now. My nose always gets red from the cold. I've lost the tip altogether."

That wasn't what he meant, Zavarikhin began to explain. No, the comparison had occurred to him that first scandalous evening when she had run around the arena in her black, low-cut costume and started to climb up to the "chasm overhead," as he put it. And from that moment on,

the sensation of fear had become so pleasant that he promised Tanya not to miss a single performance if he could just get the free time from the insurance business.

Strange, but just the memory of the circus was enough to ruin Tanya's mood. Furthermore, the penetrating chill in her spine clear up to her shoulders from lying on the wet, cold earth had not gone away, and she suddenly remembered the careless, blue-lipped hunter on the May grass. Getting up, she nonchalantly asked to go home. Zavarikhin pulled his tarpaulin up off the ground and, whistling, he shook it.

THEY took the shortest route home. And the way back seemed very short indeed. It had gotten colder, it began to drizzle; the wheels sunk deeper into the ruts, the carriage itself lost its holiday look. When, on one bump, Tanya grabbed Nikolka's shoulder, her hand felt to him like a hundred-pound weight — he feared nothing on earth so much as he feared women. Nonetheless, at the end of the trip he proposed to her that they live together as man and wife, and added, "It's not right to let every sunflower seed fly around forever with nothing to do. It's time to put down roots." Running the risk of ruining everything by her speedy acceptance, Tanya squeezed the elbow of her unexpected fiancé in mute acknowledgment. Of course, the uniqueness of the proposal frightened her a little, but she knew that people have consciences — even dogs do — and that, with a good master, there is home and peace and children.

After the last hill, when the factory sky had climbed into view, Zavarikhin set Bukhvostov's wonder horse into a fast trot for the last time, throwing his cap onto Tanya's knee in an invitation to the onrushing wind to blow out, clean out, all nonsense from his head. More and more, the city drew them into its embrace — flat, inevitable, colorless. In the outskirts, tearing through the whirlwind of foul dust, Zavarikhin repeatedly expanded on the plans for the future; perhaps because he was afraid, or perhaps for some other reason, he made out how poor he was to such an extent that Tanya, after hearing the plans, thought them touchingly modest, although three hours ago they had sounded presumptuous to the point of being funny.

"I won't invite you to see me for a while, Hela. I'll get a new apartment and then we'll move in," said Zavarikhin, and at this point in their conversation they had almost reached the street from which their wedding trip had begun. "You said

earlier that you have no pots, nor pegs to hang them on. You'd better collect some household stuff. A man should stand firmly on the ground so that no untimely storm can blow him off his feet. There are lots of storms blowing about the earth today." He stopped the horse at Bukhvostov's battered gates. "Oh, I completely forgot. Can I take you home?"

She hesitated. "No, thanks. You know, it's only two stops on the streetcar." And she tried to convince herself that it was better to prevent early rumors from running among her neighbors, rumors which could, she knew from experience, bring a sympathy more bitter than sneers.

"Well, thank God, you don't live far. I've got to return Zotei's horse to him, and then I have an appointment with an important person." He leaned over to say good-by and gave her a hug. "So now it's your turn. Tell me, who is that Pugel Stasik at your house? I've meant to ask since morning."

"Oh, don't worry about him, Nikolushka!" Tanya blushed, flattered, and for this inadvertent show of jealousy, she forgave him all his vast masculine negligence of the day. "His little children are in boarding school, and he loves them more than anything else on earth."

With a worried stare Tanya followed her fiancé through the gates and couldn't decide whether or not to thank Zavarikhin for this Easter outing. She so much wanted to suppress her last, most powerful doubt, as if a step backward were possible, as if her choice were just one of choosing living quarters. Standing behind a cement post, Tanya saw how Bukhvostov bumped his head as he ran from the porch, running and asking as he ran, Did they have a wonderful trip, were they satisfied, did they have any trouble?

"Nothing of the sort happened to us. So you were pretty scared, I guess, huh, graybeard?" Zavarikhin laughed and jumped out of the carriage. "Here, take your beauty into safekeeping. How does she like her nickname?"

"Fortunka!" Bukhvostov echoed the name with a tone of reproach, as he examined the horse all over; then he quoted what was due him for the day.

"She's worth the money — a regular satan on the run!" Zavarikhin exclaimed.

Zavarikhin wiped his mud-spattered fingers off with his handkerchief and felt the bunch of flowers intended for Tanya in his pocket, changed a good deal by the events of the day. Mechanically, he threw the flowers onto a pile of steaming manure. He couldn't even remember where this wet, crumpled grass in his pocket had come from.

*Translated by Gabriella Azrael.*

# DEATH AND THE HERO

BY ALEXANDER TVARDOVSKY

ALEXANDER TVARDOVSKY, born in 1910, is known throughout Russia for his three long poems, *THE LAND MURAVEI*, which established his reputation; *VASILY TYORKIN*, a memorial to the Russian soldier in World War II; and *SPACE ON SPACE*. He is today the editor of the leading Soviet literary periodical, *NOVY MIR*.

From beyond a distant hillock  
Came the battle's din and glow,  
But our friend Vasily Tyorkin  
Lay alone upon the snow.

And the snow was stained with scarlet  
Where the wounded hero lay  
Death came stealing like a harlot:  
"Come on, soldier, come away.

"It is time that you were going —  
Let me lead you through the gale,  
Blizzard blowing, blizzard blowing,  
Blowing snow across our trail."

Tyorkin started as he lay there,  
Scarcely breathing in the snow:  
"Who invited you, you hussy?  
I'm alive. I will not go."

Death detected some misgiving:  
"It's no matter how you strive —  
You cannot be counted living  
Just because you are alive.

"I have touched you with my shadow;  
Even now you are too weak  
To be conscious that the snowflakes  
Lie unmelting on your cheek.

"Do not fear the dark before you —  
Night is just as good as day."  
"That's all right, but what, you whore, you,  
Would you like to have me say?"

This remark, so unexpected,  
Disconcerted her a bit:  
"What I'm asking," Death reflected,  
"Is a trifle, you'll admit.

"Just a sign that you are willing  
To submit to my demands,  
That you're sick and tired of living —"

"In a word, throw up my hands?"  
Death considered, drawing nearer;

"Well, why not? I'll take the blame."  
"Nothing doing, Life is dearer."

"Silly boy, it's all the same.  
If you want it or you don't,  
All the same your hands are blue,  
All the same your sight is failing,  
Lips are paling —"  
"Go away!"

"See how quickly night is falling,  
Why prolong your misery?  
That's the reason I am calling —  
Get it over — come with me."  
"I will stay."



"Don't be foolish — you are freezing.  
You will not survive the storm.  
Let me wrap you in my blanket  
And forever keep you warm.  
You believe me. You are crying.  
Your submission makes me bold."

"Don't you trap me with your lying!  
I am crying from the cold!"

"Tears of joy and tears of pain —  
All the same! On the plain  
Night is swiftly drawing near;  
They will never find you here.  
And even if they found you,  
Would your happiness increase?  
Once again your cares would hound you —  
Better lie and die in peace."

"You are trying to ensnare me."  
Tyorkin's jaw was firmly set.  
"I must live. You cannot scare me.  
I have hardly lived as yet."

"If you live — what then? What of it?"  
She was bending to his ear.  
"If you do, you think you'll love it?  
Love the cold, the dirt, the fear?  
Life is not a bed of roses,  
Think of everything once more —"  
"Think of what? It's all familiar.  
You forget that this is war."  
"Once again you'll have the worry  
About homefolks, about home —"  
"That's the reason I must hurry,  
Kill off Jerry and get home."

"Home. Perhaps. If home were waiting,  
If your home were still intact.  
But except for bricks and grating,  
All is ashes — that's a fact.  
All in ruins —"  
"I can build it,  
I know how, and I am strong."  
"The land is wasted."  
"Once I tilled it."  
"Pipes are twisted."  
"Not for long."

"'Jack of all trades' — so they called me.  
Once I'm back, I'll mend the harm."

"You will, unless — don't interrupt me —  
You will, unless you lose an arm,  
Or in general are disabled —"

Tyorkin drew a sudden breath.  
Was there nothing that enabled  
Man to triumph over Death?  
He was ready for submission —  
Worn and weary, night at hand —  
"Listen, Death, on one condition,  
I'll transfer to your command."

And the boy, where he lay bleeding,  
So alone, so young, so weak,  
Started quietly to speak,  
In a tone of earnest pleading:

"I'm no better than the others,  
I can die as well as they,  
But when all the fighting's over,  
Will you free me for a day?  
So that I may be in Moscow  
For the victory salute?  
So that I may hear the salvo  
That the Moscow guns will shoot?  
While the rockets still are flaring,  
May I hurry home to see  
How the village folks are faring?  
They will be expecting me.  
And when friends come out to meet me  
At some old familiar spot,  
May I answer those who greet me  
With a word?"  
"You may not."

Tyorkin shuddered as he lay there,  
Yet some strength seemed to revive.  
"Get away from me and stay there,  
I'm a soldier still alive!"

"I will yell until I'm blue,  
I may perish on this hill,  
But I'll never yield to you  
Of my own free will!"

"Take it easy. By succumbing  
You will only prove the rule —"  
"Stop! They're searching! Someone's coming!  
It's the medics!"  
"Where, you fool?"

"There!" His eyes were shining.  
Death went weak with laughter then:  
"That's the squad that comes to bury!"  
"Just the same, they're living men!"

One came over, then another,  
With a crowbar and a spade.  
"Here's another stiff to cover.  
We won't finish, I'm afraid."

"Have a seat upon this body.  
All my bones, I think, are broke."  
"If we can't fill up our bellies,  
We at least can have a smoke."

"How'd you like a sup of something —  
Cabbage soup with cream on top?"  
"How'd you like a sip of something?"  
"I'd be willing — just a drop."  
"Maybe two —"

Suddenly they seemed to hear  
Someone say, just audibly:  
"Drive this Jane away from here!  
I'm alive, as you can see."

Up they jumped from off Vasily,  
Had a look — alive all right!  
"Can you beat it?"  
"Now we really  
Must get back before the night."

"Just to think of him surviving!  
Quite a marvel, on the whole!  
Not so strange to find a body,  
But a body with a soul!"

"Once his soul is whole — come on!  
Got to give the guy a hand.  
We had almost passed him on  
To the Ministry of Land."

"Get your spade without delaying,  
He is frozen to the spot.  
Chop his coat off."

Death was saying:  
"I will follow. Like as not  
They will jerk him or will drop him,  
And I'll have him back again.  
Some new accident may stop him  
From escaping with those men."

Both their spades and both their belts,  
Both their coats laid end to end —  
"Come on, soldier, lift the soldier."  
"Off we go! Have patience, friend."

Slowly, carefully they bore him,  
Trying hard to ease the ride.  
He looked happily before him;  
Death kept trailing to one side.

What a road they had to cover!  
Ruts and rocks and drifts of snow —  
"Why not rest a little, brother?"  
"That's all right. We'd better go.  
Night is coming. Don't you bother  
About us," the soldier said.  
"You can bet we'd ten times rather  
Lug a live one than a dead."

And the other said: "That's right.  
And besides, it's understood,  
That a live one must keep going,  
While a dead one's home for good."

Now it seemed the wind was easing;  
Less relentless grew the storm.  
"Lost your gloves? Your hands are freezing.  
Here, take mine, they're nice and warm."

As she listened, Death kept thinking:  
"What a friendly lot they are!"  
All her hopes were quickly sinking:  
"There's no sense in going far.  
I can see they'll never let him  
Go away with me today.  
It's a pity not to get him —"  
And she sighed and turned away.

*Translated by Margaret Wettlin.*

# LETTER FROM TASHKENT

*Playwright and poet, whose novel on the Siege of Stalingrad, DAYS AND NIGHTS, was a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club in 1945, KONSTANTIN SIMONOV has been living in Tashkent for the past two years, and in answer to an inquiry from the Atlantic Editor, he tells here the reasons why.*

BY KONSTANTIN SIMONOV

*Tashkent  
February 2, 1960*

DEAR MR. WEEKS,

Last summer, when we were gathered around my table, talking with you and your colleagues during your visit in Moscow at the invitation of our Writers' Union, I promised to contribute an article to the special issue of your magazine on Soviet arts. As I recall, we agreed that the best way to write it would be in the form of an open letter addressed to you as editor; that it would be written from Tashkent, where I have spent most of the last two years; and that the letter should explain why I am writing to you from Tashkent.

And so, dear Mr. Editor, here is a personal, detailed answer to your friendly question. Outside — I am going to look at the thermometer — it is two degrees below zero. Yesterday it snowed and rained; today it's only snowing. Yet just last Sunday I was walking around Tashkent without an overcoat.

Tashkent's weather is capricious; the temperature jumps around at will. But in the long run, hardly a day goes by without some sun, which even in winter beats down from the sky like a stick. In general, I like the short winter here. My two daughters also like it; they don't mind at all having to wear a fur coat and mittens going out

*Linocut-etching by Favorsky.*



in the morning when there is hope that toward midday, if the weather clears, they will be able to wear a sweater instead.

The house where I live was built two years ago; my neighbor and I are its first tenants. From my study on the second floor I can see the wide, paved street, with trolleys, buses, and cars streaming by. Directly across the street there is a huge new printing press, which is already overloaded with work. The publishing firms in Tashkent are putting out an increasing number of books, both in Russian and in Uzbek; and in the summer, when the orders for textbooks pour in and the output is increased by approximately a million copies, the manuscripts begin to pile up on top of each other.

I live in what is called the "old city." In the past, Tashkent was divided into the old, Asiatic section and the new, Russian section. Today this old, Asiatic part of the city offers an interesting spectacle. The widest thoroughfares were built right through it for many kilometers; along some of them, there are modern houses ranged on one side, and on the other side, on the very edge of the pavement, splashing out like ocean surf are the



brick walls and fences of the old, Asiatic cottages and shacks.

Our street, which is called Polygraphicheskaya because of the printing press on it, was cut through only a few years ago, and the opposite side of it has been entirely built up with new houses. But on our side, things are far from crowded. From the window of my study can be seen the old city, with all the disorder and confusion\*which the passage of time has brought into it: the small adobe houses, with brand-new brick cottages squeezed in between them; the streets, covered with asphalt but still twisting, like a snake which has forgotten which end is its head and which its tail. The layer of asphalt is calculated to hold ten-ton trucks, yet the streets are just barely wide enough for two mules to get by each other. (By the way, the usual resolution was recently passed for the final eviction of mules from the city limits of Tashkent, but among the older muleteers there are those who say that in all their lives they have never read of any such decree, and I'm afraid that if they leave the city now, it is only with the hope of returning at the first opportunity).

In the courtyards of some of the houses stand the *tandirs* — round earthen ovens for baking Uzbek pancakes; in other courtyards (and sometimes even in the same ones) there are red balloons holding the artificial gas we now need for our stoves. It has been promised that natural gas will be piped to Tashkent from Bukhara in the spring. In Samarkand last fall I watched the solemn lighting of a gas torch near the tomb of Tamerlane. At the present time the gas is piped right through the Gate of Tamerlane, a narrow gorge between Samarkand and Tashkent; according to legend, the iron gate of Tamerlane used to hang here, closing the entrance to his Samarkand domain. This summer or autumn the workers will begin laying gas lines to the old city courtyards, and then the red balloons will disappear.

In the villages of the Ferghana Valley you can now see a curious spectacle. The temporary gas lines run along the streets, through the clay rural fences. Gas pipes with faucets at the end are led straight through the air into the courtyards, to the ancient *tandirs*, where the pancakes are baked. Ordinarily the women use the traditional fuel of the desert, *saksaul*, to bake these pancakes; but even the old crones say that the pancakes come out none the worse when gas is used.

COMING back to the old city, what is most noticeable is the foliage. Each clay courtyard in the old city is full of vegetation that clambers to escape. There are grapes, apricots, peaches, and

just as much plant life as can possibly grow. This isn't so evident now, in the winter; only a thick forest of bare twigs sticks out above the roofs, half covered with snow. But in March all will be pink with blossoms. In April it will be green, and in July the clay courtyards will seem ready to burst from the pressure of the foliage.

Our family could not resist the temptation to add to the vegetation all around us. Behind our house is a small vacant area enclosed with a brick fence. Here we planted trees: two pear trees, two cherry, three peach, two apricot, two lilac bushes, twenty rosebushes; these are the perennials. Very quick to take root here in the south, too, are the annuals, such as the castor-oil plant and the sunflowers. Our courtyard was green by June, and on one tree there were actually fifteen apricots (my wife tells me that I am exaggerating, as usual.)

Also in our courtyard, as in many others in the old city, there is a small concrete pool, or as they say here, a *khauz*. The people of Tashkent love water; in hot weather they're always able to find a spot which is either on or near the water, and in that cooler spot they drink their tea and cook pilaf. They manage to sit so that if there is a breeze, it will blow on them.

And so we dug one of these *khauzes* for ourselves in the courtyard, laid the bricks and poured the cement. But inasmuch as my younger daughter is rather undisciplined, the *khauz* had to be made shallow. When we first began, I had her sit down on the ground and I measured with a tape the distance from the ground to her chin, so that when the *khauz* was finished she wouldn't be able to swallow water even in a sitting position. We dug the *khauz* according to this measurement. Since that time, she has grown taller and taller, and now I suppose we can make it ten centimeters deeper.

I hope that what I am saying helps to answer your question. Apart from everything else, I like living here because, even though I generally spend a number of hours at my desk and do a lot of traveling, I still have time to busy myself with such things as this *khauz* and the apricots. Not exactly momentous preoccupations, of course; but when a man cannot take time out for such trivialities, he loses his capacity to enjoy life.

I must stop now. This evening I have to attend the commemoration of the centennial of the birth of Anton Pavlovich Chekhov. The tickets are on my desk in front of me, printed in two languages, Uzbek and Russian. The ceremony will be held in the two languages; both Uzbek and Russian writers and actors are going to appear. Speeches on television will also be bilingual. Now, more than ever, when the centennial is close at hand, Chek-

hov's works are being read and performed frequently, both in Uzbek and in Russian. The day before yesterday, *Uncle Vanya* was broadcast from the theater, in the Uzbek language. Of all the Russian classics, Chekhov is probably the most popular here. The Uzbek people have a keen, subtle sense of humor, and Chekhov's astute wit finds immediate response in Uzbekistan. His popularity is not limited to the intelligentsia in the cities; he is appreciated in the villages as well. One of the most gifted Uzbek prose writers of our day, Abdulla Kakhkhar, considers himself a disciple of Chekhov, and in fact he is. The Chekhovian strain, as it appears throughout Kakhkhar's stories, has lately become a fundamental part of Uzbek literature. Kakhkhar will speak today at the Chekhov celebration. I don't know whether his address will be in Uzbek or in Russian; he writes only in Uzbek, but he speaks in both Uzbek and Russian and has an excellent command of both languages.

TO CONTINUE. I did not get to the Chekhov celebration after all. I had an engagement made long ago which I forgot all about. The man I had arranged to see showed up, and I spent the whole evening talking with him. His name is Alexei Stepanovich S — and he is an engineer at a plant which makes textile machinery. His plant in Tashkent at the moment is exporting its machines to some fifteen nations in Asia, Africa, and Europe. In the various books about Turkistan written by czarist officials at the beginning of this century, the future — even the remote future — of all Central Asia was pictured only as a colonial future, and the only question was whether colonial politics should be handled with more progressive or more conservative methods. The last book I glanced through was by one Likoshin, *Half a Life in Turkistan: Essays on the Customs of the Native Inhabitants*, published in Petrograd in January, 1917. Not one of the fifty chapters in this volume was devoted to the future industrial developments. The author's eyes would have popped out if he had been told that forty years later textile machinery made in Tashkent would be exported to Prague and Dresden.

Two months ago I gave a talk in the club assembly hall of this plant. The hall was not especially warm or commodious, but on that day it was all right with me, because all six hundred seats were occupied. The people came at the end of an eight-hour day; they were very tired, and they wore overcoats and jackets because it was raining and the club, as I said, was cold. Nevertheless, for about two hours they listened, first to poetry readings, and then to the account of my literary work

and of the work other writers are doing. At the end they sent up notes asking questions about everything. Now, I want to point out that I am not too brilliant a raconteur; at any rate, I haven't the gift of inspiring enthusiasm in an audience. This is not a huge, standard Moscow plant with an established tradition of inviting various literary and artistic celebrities. It is a Tashkent enterprise of average size, and yet six hundred working people after a hard day came into a cold, uncomfortable barracks, which they kept cursing under their breaths, for the sake of listening to and questioning writers. To me this is gratifying, and I am pleased for the men of my profession.

I told them about the novel I was working on, which deals with the fighting on the outskirts of Moscow in 1941, a very dismal year for us. During the discussion period which followed, several of the older workers told me in no uncertain terms that to write about 1941 at the front was to do only half the job. In their opinion, writers should write, and write without delay, while the participants are still alive, about the summer and autumn of 1941, when the whole industry of the Ukraine and the west and south of Russia was transported, under the very noses of the Germans, in conditions of incredible hardship and deprivation, to the east — to the Volga, the Urals, to Siberia, and here, to Central Asia. Without this, they said, we would never have seen victory. I agreed that they were right, and I tried to get off with a joke at my own expense: it was too late, I said, to make substantial changes in my novel; it was almost finished. I added that I write mostly about what I have seen with my own eyes, and during the war I was not in the rear. This brought the reply that there would be nothing wrong with my finding out about what I hadn't seen with my own eyes.

AFTERWARDS, when the novel was finished and I had come to that pleasant pause when one task had been completed and another had not yet begun, I suddenly thought: And what if those boys at the plant were right that evening? Even though I am planning to write my next novel about the front also, still, it might be a good idea to have a long and detailed talk with the people who transported the whole industry from the west to the east in the summer and autumn of 1941; the people who somehow managed to manufacture weapons only twenty, thirty, fifty days after the raw materials had been unloaded. With these thoughts, I went to the trade union committee at the plant, and I haven't been out of the place for three weeks. But I still have a list of about

thirty people whose stories remain to be taken down.

Alexei Stepanovich S —, who visited me last evening, turned out to be just the man to help me in my work. He was one of those who dismantled a factory on the shore of the Sea of Azov when the Germans were just outside the city; he transported the equipment via the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, and the Kara Kum Desert to Tashkent and turned over to the military superintendent the factory's first war output on the fortieth day after arriving in Tashkent. Before the war, this factory had manufactured mowing and harvesting machines. His retentive memory held a hundred names and details.

Among many other things, he told me this story. He had long since evacuated his family, and the last machine was finally loaded. An hour before leaving, he stopped in at his empty apartment. The Germans were on the outskirts of the town, but the central heating was working and everything in the apartment was bright, clean — and unbearably stuffy. And in this brand-new, clean apartment which the young engineer had only recently obtained and furnished, in its polished floors and its stuffy air, there was a feeling of something so irrevocable that, without making use of the ten minutes which he had left, without even picking up the things he had come back for, he ran outside and empty-handed went through the deserted town to his last shipment of machines at the freight station.

I will not attempt to describe for you in this letter his feelings. But from the way he told me about it, from the expression on his face, I think I would know how to picture, if I ever have to, this last visit to an abandoned home. Of course, this is not the first time I have heard such stories, but the fact is that you listen to a hundred stories and you experience only the hundred and first.

**H**ERE in Central Asia I have spent much of my time traveling, and when I am through with my interviews at the plant, I intend to start going places again.

My recent trips have taken me by car through Samarkand to ancient Bukhara, where there are a hundred-odd old Muslim schools. Around Bukhara there are four hundred billion cubic meters of newly discovered gas. Then I flew to ancient Khiva, where the last local feudal khanate was finally liquidated as late as the 1920s. From there I went to the autonomous republic of Kara-Kalpak, situated in the northwest of Uzbekistan; and from its capital, the neat little white town of Nukus (which not too long ago wasn't even on the

map), I continued to travel by plane and automobile to still more remote spots.

Kara-Kalpak is only a part of Uzbekistan, which in turn is only a small part of Central Asia; but even within Kara-Kalpak the distances are considerable. On the border of Kara-Kalpak and Turkmenia I visited the famous ruins of Kunya-Urgench, deep in the desert. In these sands a recent archaeological expedition led by the academician Tolstov found the remnants of the lost kingdom of Khorezm. These explorations are going on right now, and close beside the minarets and ruins of Kunya-Urgench, thrusting out of the sand, the expedition's jeeps grumble and roar.

At another time I flew from Nukus to the northwest. My ultimate destination was the Aral Sea, where fishermen and muskrat hunters live on the island of Muinak. For a whole hour, under the wing, stretches the boundless delta of the Amu-Darya River, with its overgrowth of rushes, its watery roads and paths and tracks; with fishermen's and hunters' boats here and there in the flooded spots; with reeds five meters high. There is such an abundance of fish, birds, and wildlife that inveterate hunters and fishermen fly here all the way from European Russia. Around this district they say that the Amu-Darya Delta is twice as large as the delta of the Volga, and larger even than the Nile Delta. I can't vouch for the accuracy of these assertions, but I can assure you that this is a sight well worth seeing.

The fishermen on Muinak catch perch, pickerel, bream, carp, and the celebrated Aral barbel. There are smokehouses on the spot, where the fish are dried and cured; and a visitor can hardly refrain from carrying away a couple of these monsters, almost a meter long, dried to tenderness. In the airport at Tashkent, without even listening to the public address system, you can tell when a plane has arrived from the Aral Sea: the passengers carry long rolls of wrapping paper out of which stick fishtails. These are the Aral barbels. At the Tashkent airport they joke about the passengers from this flight: "The barbels have landed!"

In addition to fish, they catch muskrat on Muinak — the little American animal which has become so well acclimatized to the Amu-Darya Delta. I was on Muinak in the middle of October, right at the height of the muskrat season, when for an entire branch of national industry in charge of hunting there remained in the office a total of two men: the warehouse man and the bookkeeper. All the others, including the manager and his assistant, had gone to their favorite spots in the coastal reeds; scattered over a hundred kilometers in one direction from the center of industry and a hundred kilometers in the other direction, they



were trapping muskrat. I myself spent several days riding through the rushes in a launch and a motorboat, from one muskrat trap to another. At the peak of the muskrat season there are more than a thousand men hunting here at one time. But all this is spread out over such a vast area that it's not so simple to find your way from one hunter to another, from tent to tent. Even the man who was running our motorboat, who knew every waterway through these rushes like the palm of his hand, got lost once, and we spent half a day going around in circles near the hunter we were looking for. Two or three times we heard human voices but were sidetracked and lost our way again. At last our common sense won out over our pride; we were reduced to firing rifle shots to signal our whereabouts.

My next trip was to Turkmenia. First I was in the north, in Tashauz, on the northern edge of the Kara Kum Desert. At the end of November, when we were there, there was a good solid frost; the climate in those regions is severe.

Then, flying over the central Kara Kum, we made our way to the capital of Turkmenia, sunny Ashkhabad, at this time still green with foliage. From there, together with the chairman of a kolkhoz [collective farm], we went back to the Kara Kum, to the cattle breeders of this kolkhoz. We rode through the sands in jeeps, got stuck here and there, but finally got ourselves out. In order to reach the nearest flocks of sheep, it took us all day by jeep; to reach the more distant flocks, it took a full day and night; and two days and nights to reach the most distant flocks.

After the terrible earthquake of 1948, Ashkhabad was completely rebuilt. Now it is the newest, and in my opinion the most bewitching, of all Central Asian capitals. It has extended far beyond its former city limits; the small houses of the chairman and many members of the kolkhoz have become part of the ever-expanding city. The market gardens of the kolkhoz, which provide all Ashkhabad with vegetables, are right outside the city. The large, completely modern aviary, with tens of thousands of birds, is about twenty kilometers from the city. And the outlying flocks of sheep belonging to the kolkhoz are three hundred and even four hundred kilometers away.

By the way, when I asked the chairman of this kolkhoz what his former occupation was, it turned out that he had been employed by the Academy of Sciences. Educated to be an economist, he was for a long time a scientist in the Institute of Economics. Then he became tired of theorizing and turned to practice; this is his eighth year as chairman of the kolkhoz, which has grown meanwhile into a very large farm. There are only about twenty workers with a university education in the

kolkhoz — agronomists, zoologists, veterinarians, and doctors. This does not include teachers in the five schools scattered over the vast territory of the kolkhoz.

I spent a great deal of time during all these travels talking with many different kinds of people — with agronomists and kolkhoz chairmen, with bookkeepers and accountants, with shepherds and zoologists, with rural schoolteachers and doctors, with fishermen and workers in the canned goods and cotton factories, with chauffeurs and excavators, with drivers of cotton harvesting machines, and with bricklayers building houses in the middle of the steppes, where the nearest roofed house is sometimes dozens of kilometers away. I wrote down some of these talks in notebooks; others I retained in my memory; some were not worth preserving at all. Let's not exaggerate — not all of these trips were equally interesting, not every interview was fruitful. But the overall picture of the country which emerged after such journeys, the picture of its life — vigorous, tempestuous, fraught with hardship and struggle — cannot come to the writer by reading newspapers at home.

There is no doubt that we are really progressing, that important things are being done; but in order for us, as writers, to get the feel of it, we must see it with our own eyes, we must hear it repeatedly in firsthand reports. We must listen not only to the stories of the people but to their arguments among themselves, preferably eavesdropping during those hours and minutes when they are unaware of our presence.

I won't try to tell you how interesting all this is. I will simply say that without all this my life would have been dull indeed.

WHEN I left Moscow, I intended to remain in Tashkent for a year and a half or two years, but I'll have to stay here a few months longer because the projects connected with my work and my travels through Central Asia did not fit into the time which I originally thought would be sufficient. My wife is a professional art critic; during our years in Tashkent, she has been working at the Institute of Art of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences. This summer she will finish gathering materials for a book about Central Asian ceramics, which she plans to write next autumn.

By the way, the art of ceramics has attracted me, too. There are wonderful native ceramics in Uzbekistan, and the more I travel, the more interested I am. (I am even thinking of including in my travels this spring a special trip to see potters at work in the remote corners of Uzbekistan which

I have not yet visited.) It's not that I was especially interested in antiques; I traveled only to villages where the potters still make, as of old, their *lyagani* for pilaf, *kosi* for Uzbek soup, and *shurpi*, bowls for green tea. Now our apartment in Tashkent is cluttered with specimens of these artifacts. When this was all gathered together — and the collection is still far from complete — I rejoiced over my riches (in the artistic sense, of course; these clay plates cost only a few rubles each). Probably I too will write about these plates, cups, and bowls; not a book, because I'm not a specialist, but an article, illustrated with photographs for documentation, in some magazine with a large circulation, so as to reach a lot of people.

The folk art of ceramics here in Central Asia is in urgent need of attention and support. Many old masters of the craft have no apprentices; others do not have satisfactory paint; some live so far away from the urban centers that samples of their work go no farther than their own villages. Many of them are occupied with other things and practice their art only in leisure time. There are other ceramists whose kilns have fallen to pieces, but they are in doubt about whether to build new ones, because the shops are full of porcelain and there is no immediate demand for pottery wares. This fine craft ought to be supported, just as rug weaving is supported here in Central Asia, or as the craft of wooden and clay homemade toys and other wonderful arts are supported in Russia.

I have experienced a certain sense of satisfaction from the gathering of this collection, partly because it may help me to persuade other people to do likewise, but even more because I became acquainted with some little-known but remarkable artists; I saw them at work, drank green tea with them in their homes, and talked with them about their art. I repeat, they make very beautiful plates — simply amazing. My only regret is that I can't enclose a specimen in this letter; it would be more eloquent than any words.

And so, in the autumn I expect to return to Moscow, and for a year, probably, I'll be digging into the war archives. Without this research I couldn't even think of sitting down to that war novel I'm planning to write.

As to where I will start on my novel and where I will finish it and what sort of life I'll be leading while I am working on it, my wife and I will think about this a year or a year and a half from now. I may even go to Siberia or to the Far East, where I will be able to carry out my old projects and at the same time discover new things, as it has happened here in Tashkent.

By the way, I finished up the most important parts of my last war novel right here in Tashkent, between travels, in the midst of various preoccupa-

tions which seemingly did not have the slightest relation to the novel, but I think it was precisely these travels and these preoccupations which helped me to finish it. This book is about the incredible losses and unequalled self-sacrifice of the people during the first year of the war. The title is *The Living and the Dead*. In order to explain the meaning of the cause for which the dead have fallen, it is very important to know what the living are doing now, when (thank God) there is peace on earth; it is very important to be convinced that the dead were not sacrificed in vain. I am not an amateur painter of battle pictures; descriptions of war, in themselves, have little interest for me. I am troubled by the question: What were we defending with such violence and determination? And in order to answer this question, for myself above all, it is important to live among people and preoccupations (in Central Asia, for example) which have no direct relation to literature but which bear the most direct relation to the answer to this question.

If someday I look back and add up the total of my life in Tashkent, I shall recall not only that I completed a novel, or wrote two books of essays, or translated from the Uzbek language a very fine short story, which I never would have thought of translating had I not traveled through Uzbek *kishlaks* [villages], where its action took place. I shall go over the nearly two thousand pages of notes taken down since I have been in Tashkent, recording my conversations with various interesting people, the majority of whom I never would have met had I been sitting all these years in my Moscow apartment. In addition, I shall recall many fleeting scenes and sensations, sunsets and dawns, crossings of rivers and deserts, the friendly impromptu snacks, the nights spent under the stars. At first glance this does not fall into the category of an account. But only at first glance.

THIS letter could be endless, yet I must stop somewhere. So, since you are something of a fisherman yourself, and even went fishing in Tashkent with my friends, I will end my letter with a lyrical reminiscence of fish.

It happened during my first six months here, early in June, 1958. We were riding in two jeeps through the southern Kara Kum Desert, along the route of the first stage of the South Kara Kum Canal, at that time still unfinished. Our vehicles jounced over the sandy humps as if we were riding on Bactrian camels and were being bounced back and forth every second from one hump to the other. Only the *saksaul* protruded from the sand, and the high, white, bloodless poisonous mush-

rooms, which stood up like candles. It was so hot that even the lizards did not creep out into the sun.

And then finally, around six o'clock, we reached the water. All the time we had been going toward it; ahead of us the water had already been released into the canal. It flowed in slowly and then receded about forty kilometers. And there, where the water had passed through a few days before, little lakes had formed among the sandy hills. They were drying up at the catastrophic rate of half a meter a day, but some fish managed to swim into these little lakes from the Amu-Darya. We got out of our jeeps and proceeded to fish. Within an hour we caught, believe it or not, two full bags. After packing them away in our jeeps, we drove on. We pitched camp on a large sand dune and made several pails of fish chowder over an open fire. It was getting dark; the heat suddenly abated; and with great relish we drank the hot chowder out of glass compote jars. The fish, taken out of the chowder to be eaten later, lay steaming on sheaves of plywood — we had nothing else to put it on.

That night we must have been the first people to eat fish in the very center of the Kara Kum Desert. The sky was full of stars, absolute silence reigned, and the night was unbelievably cold after the heat that had tormented us during the day.

In the morning, when first the sand and then the sky began to flush pink, the hill where we had spent the night was encircled by hesitant fox tracks, aimed not so much at us as at the fish left over after our meal.

When I return to Moscow, I shall recall many things, especially evenings such as this one in the desert. Such memories have a certain significance, too.

Our mutual friend Hamid Gulyam, with whom you went fishing in Tashkent, sends you his regards.

My wife has read the foregoing, and as usual says that I wrote much too much, but she subscribes in essence to what I had to say and also asks to be remembered to you.

My older daughter is downstairs, cramming for a test on French verbs, and she is making so much noise that I can hear her voice through the floor.

My younger daughter is walking and ruminating in the courtyard around the pool and poking a wooden shovel at the thin ice frozen to stillness on the surface of the water. The weather has been cold all morning.

I shake your hand.

*Respectfully,*

KONSTANTIN SIMONOV

*Translated by Gail L. McGovern*

## Pioneers

By Yevgeny Yevtushenko

*Yevgeny Yevtushenko, who was born in 1933, is one of the most highly regarded of the young Soviet poets.*

I lie upon damp earth and hug  
A spade, and let the minutes pass,  
A blade of grass between my lips,  
A rather sourish blade of grass.

In ground so devilishly hard  
Spades break before they can strike deep;  
And how I long to fall asleep,  
But you are not allowed to sleep.

"You can't get on your legs at all,  
Just look at the poor dear!" she hoots:  
A girl in a blue sleeveless shirt,  
Her overalls stuck in her boots.

As luck will have it, she strikes up  
A song that lilts, a lilting song:  
"I'll find my love, and when I do  
Won't I torment him all day long!"

Boldly she flashes her blue spade,  
Jangles her earrings, for a stunt  
Flings out a sudden word so raw  
Even the boys look up and grunt.

They laugh, the lot!

"Eh, what a snake!"

"Well, Anka,

how she hands it out!"

The currant bushes and the stars  
May know, as I know without doubt

That, past the intoxicated bushes,  
Pushing the towering grass aside,  
She enters the night woods with me,  
Moving as with a drunken stride,

And that she drops her swarthy arms,  
Clumsy as if her pulses failed,  
And in the darkness speaks to me  
Beautiful words and veiled.

*Translated by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky.*





*Leningrad: The Fortress of Peter and Paul by Night*

*By Ostroumova-Lebedeva*

## ART IN THE SOVIET UNION

BY RICHARD B. K. McLANATHAN

*As curator of the art at the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959, RICHARD B. K. McLANATHAN had a six months' opportunity in which to assess the development in painting and sculpture which has taken place in the Soviet Union since the Revolution. Mr. McLanathan is director of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica, New York.*

TOWARD the end of the tenth century, the envoys of Vladimir, Great Prince of Kiev, were led by the emperor himself into the cathedral at Byzantium. They heard gravely chanting voices and saw the ritual of the Eastern Church performed by the light of countless candles. "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth," they reported to their master on their return, "for on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty." Their mission not only resulted in the conversion of the pagan Vladimir, descendant of Vikings, to the Christianity of the Eastern Empire but also provided impetus and direction for the whole artistic achievement of Russia down to the present day. Native artists humanized the hieratic Byzantine tradition and created a distinctive style combining natural Slavic qualities, which reappear strongly in modern times: a tendency toward abstraction, a love of rich color, and an expressionism ranging from the lyric to the austere. By the fifteenth century, led by such masters as Rublev and Theophanes, Russian art flowered in a golden age whose icons (Figure 1), among the highest expressions of medieval culture, represent Russia's greatest

achievement in the visual arts — a fact which has come to be fully realized, even in Russia, only in our own times.

The years of Tatar domination strengthened Eastern ties and deepened the gulf between Russia and the West. It was not until the nineteenth century that the policy of Europeanization, introduced by Peter the Great and continued by his successors, made possible the fertilization of native talent by Western influences and produced the classic Russian literature and music which have become a part of our common heritage. In the visual arts, however, Russia remained a province of Europe, following the current academic modes of classicism and romanticism until the second half of the century. Then the more liberal atmosphere of the earlier years of Alexander II's reign encouraged a revolt against the triviality of official and fashionable art similar to that led by Courbet and Manet in Paris a few years earlier. In the 1860s, a group of thirteen promising student artists resigned from the Academy in protest against the official theme announced for the gold medal competition, "Odin in Valhalla,"

and formed the Fellowship of Wanderers. Following the lead of Gogol and the writers inspired by him, they turned to the realities of everyday Russian life in an attempt to create a national school. Their genre approach became increasingly directed toward exposing social evils. Within a few years, a far more powerful personality, the Cossack Repin, provided a climax to this movement with dramatic canvases of great virtuosity (Figure 11).

Meanwhile, in Russia as in the West, the forces were gathering to produce simultaneous revolutionary movements in the arts. With a tragic life paralleling that of Van Gogh, Vrubel was a leader in the reaction against the academic realism, which, in any lesser hand than Repin's, had become sterile. He and the group known as *Mir Iskusstva* (*World of Art*, a publication edited by Diaghilev and founded to express their ideas) rediscovered the wonders of the Slavic past: ancient architecture whose splendors were the antithesis of the current classic style, colorful costumes, and above all, the antique icons whose powerful but restrained symbolism and elevated emotional expression provided the greatest possible contrast to the realism of the Wanderers.

Following Vrubel's lead, Benois, Bakst, and Roerich, painters of the World of Art group who designed for the theater, and Diaghilev, art lover and impresario, expressed the new ideas through a combination of music, choreography, and scene and costume design. Their dazzling series of theatrical experiments established the international reputation of Russian ballet and opera.

Others than the World of Art group were also active, both at home and abroad. The merchant princes and great patrons, Mamontov, Tretyakov, and Shchukin, were forming their superb collections, rich in contemporary European art, which became schools for Russian artists. In Munich, Kandinsky (Figure 6), one of the most inventive personalities in the history of modern art, led the way into the first totally nonobjective painting, with his application of musical and associational theory to the expressive qualities of color which he found in ancient Russian art. In Moscow, Malevich (Figure 2) also was soon experimenting in nonrepresentational painting, with a geometry influenced by cubism, in a course parallel to that of the constructivists, Gabo and Pevsner, in sculpture and in architecture.

Even before the Revolution was over, the *vrhutemas*, workshops of art and technology, replaced Moscow's Imperial Academy, and Kandinsky, Malevich, Pevsner, and the architect and sculptor Tatlin were appointed members of the faculty. The workshop became a center of intense discussion and of artistic experiment among a

group, including the leaders of the new generation of artists, who were determined that something creative and symbolic of a happier future should be achieved despite what Gabo described as the "whirlwind of war and civil war, utter physical privation and political strife" which surrounded them. Though neither project was realized, Tatlin's amazing scheme of a revolving spiral office tower of glass and steel as a monument to the Third International and Gabo's impressive design, with its daring engineering, for the Palace of the Soviets remain evidences of the imaginative quality of their concepts.

For a short period, this group was closely identified with the Revolution, endeavoring to express its aim of a new order based upon the Bolshevik idea of collective man in a mechanistic society constructed according to the principles of American technology. Sir Herbert Read has observed that "the machine is the universal and coercive symbol of our age," and the Soviets were determined that man was to become a selfless robot in this pattern, an "apparatus," according to Marxist theory, "through which history operates." Mayakovsky's verses extolling Chicago as "the electro-dynamo-mechanical city, built on a screw and rotating every hour around itself" expressed the spirit of the moment.

But all experimental art emphasizes individualism, and thus is in basic conflict with the collectivist idea. Furthermore, abstract or nonobjective art proved to have little appeal for the then illiterate Soviet masses, and because of the profound unrest which pervaded Russian society in the 1920s, the Communist Party, as a part of its program to ensure discipline and strict conformity, officially condemned the modern movement and decreed a restoration of the academic realism of the previous century to reform art into an efficient tool of political policy. Socialist realism, "the art of social command," was the official, and therefore the only acceptable, style. The artist became a state functionary and an illustrator of an imposed ideology, his work judged primarily by accuracy of political conformity rather than by aesthetic criteria. It was the duty of the State Committee for the Affairs of Art constantly to scrutinize artistic production and to reprimand and correct any deviation.

Gabo, Pevsner, and their associates were expelled from the Central Soviet of Artists and deprived of earning a living through their art. With Chagall, Kandinsky, and many others, they joined numerous members of the World of Art group in exile. Tatlin and Malevich endeavored to compromise, one as an industrial designer and the other as a decorator of pottery, and disappeared into obscurity. Thus a fundamental ques-

tion of our era, the relation of the artist to society, was answered in the Soviet Union by political decree, and academic realism, which had been developed in great part as a means of exposing social evils under a czarist regime, became the tool of a government, if anything, more absolute. All else was condemned as formalistic, a term which included any artistic styles not based upon the accepted Marxist philosophy of materialism.

THE problem of the creative artist in the Soviet Union has ever since been a serious one, and many talented individuals have been deterred from professional practice in the visual arts, since close political control and constant urging to produce, in the words of a *Pravda* editorial, "healthy, cheerful, optimistic Soviet art," embodying "the light and joy of the new world" of Communism, inevitably tended to mediocre results, oversize, monotonous in style, illustrative in approach, and empty of content except for obvious subject matter.

Yet such is the creative power of the Russian people that there remained dedicated artists like Filonov (Figure 3), who suffered abject poverty and official censure in order to continue the native Russian tradition of imaginative expression. The feeling for medium, the craftsmanship, and the insight of the true artist cannot be denied, and a respect for the essential dignity of man, nourished alike by patriotism and a desire to serve society in a more universal sense, can triumph over deadening limitations, as in the striking sculptures of Konev (Figure 16). And since portraiture necessarily deals with the individual, the artist's increased opportunity for personal interpretation can result in such capable work as that of Kapetsa (Figure 8), or even reach the rare achievement of Glazunov (Figure 15).

The graphic artist, working in the smaller and more personal print techniques, is freer to express, in a more direct and poetic fashion, the joy in the natural world and the homely incidents of everyday life which are such a significant part of the Russians' awareness. Consequently, the average level of Soviet graphic art is higher than those of painting and sculpture.

Imaginative artistic experiment is still being carried on in the Soviet Union, since the tradition which enabled the Russians to contribute so significantly to the art of the past as well as to that of our own day has proved too vigorous to be blocked by official decree. Many artists do abstract works in the privacy of their studios and at the same time carry out routine state commissions

in the style of socialist realism. Youthful and often very able nonprofessionals, who are not subject to the discipline of the Artists' Union, are also active. Most of this unofficial art displays the traditional Slavic qualities of rich and compelling color, powerful and simple design tending to abstraction, and strong emotional expression, which give it a distinctly Russian flavor. It is not supposed to be exhibited or sold and is officially unacceptable, yet much is produced, and many are deeply interested in it, as in all modern art, especially American. Marked successes in those already abstract arts of music and the dance have aroused ambition for equal achievement in the visual arts, and Western influences are again, as in the last century, stimulating Russian imagination.

Change toward greater creative freedom seems possible. Writing in Moscow last August, Ilya Ehrenburg, certainly a leading Soviet critic, who speaks with authority, analyzed at some length the artist's educational responsibility. Conceding that the basic purpose must be socially constructive, Ehrenburg concluded that the artist becomes the best educator when he is being least consciously and deliberately pedagogical. This and other implications in his article may suggest a new interpretation of social command.

There are also further developments which may point in a similar direction. A sense of pride in a great but only very recently rediscovered past is being expressed in the restoration of ancient buildings, including churches and palaces. There is scientific investigation and careful preservation of works of art, especially icons, which until yesterday were despised as symbols of ignorance and superstition; the names of Andrei Rublev and Theophanes are now mentioned with admiration equal to that felt for Repin and Roerich. Russian love of art, always great, seems increasing, and museums are being rearranged, resulting in increased attendance. Many books and periodicals on art are being published, including works of prerevolutionary and foreign artists, and the canvases of such painters as Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Matisse, recently judged heretical, are now exhibited.

Perhaps, similarly, other treasures of modern art, many by Russia's own leading masters, now hidden away in storage may one day be liberated for all to see. So much that is constructive and creative is being accomplished, despite the greatest obstacles, that there is reason to hope that eventually the Russian artist may again be free to contribute to the world's culture in a measure worthy of a gifted and imaginative people who are the inheritors of a great tradition.



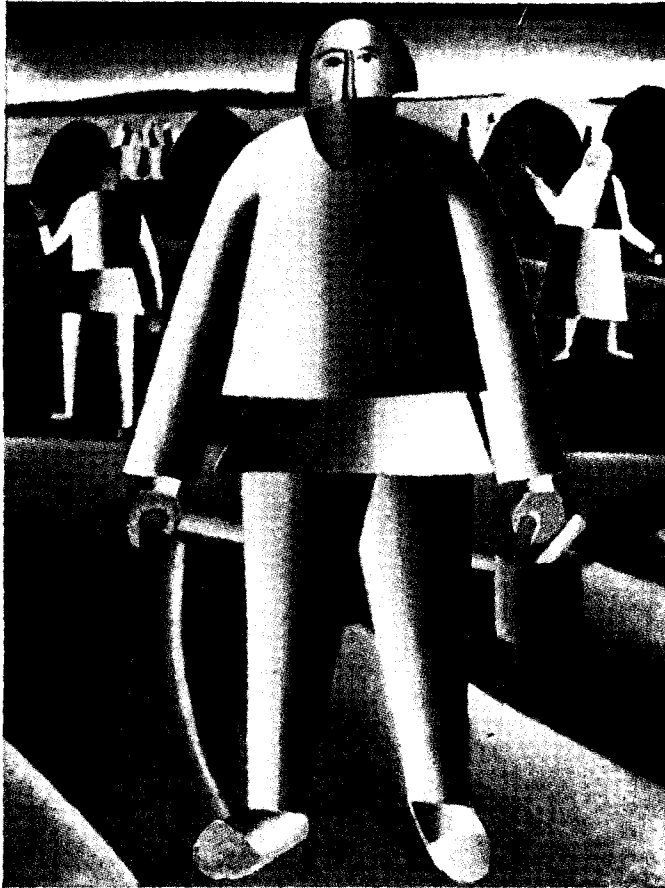


1 SCHOOL OF PSKOV, FOURTEENTH CENTURY:

*SS. Paraskeve (?), Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, and Basil the Great*

By the abstract means of schematic brushwork in the heads and the bold but subtle pattern of the vestments, the anonymous Russian painter of this icon, a follower of Theophanes the Greek, has created a vibrant symbol and a superlative work of art.

*Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.*



**2 MALEVICH: *Hay Time*, 1909**

An example of the early work, showing influence of both the Fauves and cubism, of a painter who became a pioneer nonobjective artist.  
*Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.*

**3 FILONOV: *Flowers***

A very gifted artist who, though he could never exhibit or sell a picture, painted in an abstract style until his death in 1941.  
*Russian Museum, Leningrad.*



**4 CHAGALL: *The Window*, 1914**

Chagall's art, often surrealistic, is largely a romantic and evocative recollection of Russian village life expressed with a dreamlike intensity and immediacy.  
*Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.*



**5 LENTULOV: *New Jerusalem*, 1917**

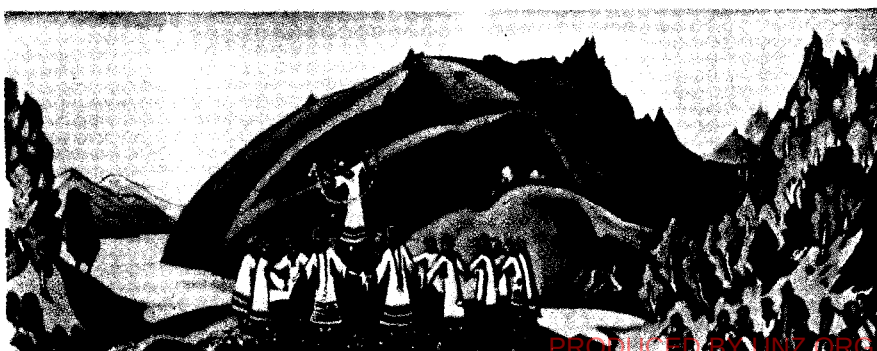
The deliberate distortion and brilliant color of expressionism used to heighten the effect of typical Russian architecture.  
*Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow*





**6 KANDINSKY: *Composition 219*, 1919**

One of the leaders of the modern movement, Kandinsky combined in his painting the inherent Slavic feeling for music, love of color, and tendency toward abstraction.  
*Russian Museum, Leningrad.*



**7 ROERICH: *Sacre du Printemps***

A reminiscence of the stage set which he designed for Diaghilev's brilliant first production of Stravinsky's famous ballet in 1913.  
*Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.*





8 KAPETSA: *Portrait of Vasily Evanov*

Some of the most capable of Soviet official painting today is in the form of portraits such as this.

9 ZVEREV: *Bowl of Cherries*, 1959

The work of a young Soviet artist of great promise whose interest in the idiom of Western painting is clear.

10 OSIS: *Latvian Fishermen*

One of the few Latvian artists of today who can approach the vigor in realistic painting of Repin, an example of whose work is illustrated at the right.

11 REPIN: *The Cossacks' Reply to the Sultan*

An example of the vigorous painting of the leading master of the realist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. His work is regarded as a model for contemporary official Soviet painting, though few of his followers approach his quality.  
*Pushkin Museum, Moscow.*



12 OSENYEV: *October at Smolny*

Typical of contemporary Soviet historical painting. Smolny Abbey was Lenin's headquarters at the time of the Revolution. Note the smiling presence of Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky.





**13 VRUBEL: *A Boyar***

The powerfully expressive and imaginative work of this gifted but tragic artist of the turn of the century was based on a rediscovery of the Slavic past and an awareness of progressive contemporary achievements.

**14 ABDULLAEV: *Builders of Happiness***

The happy worker is one of the most common subjects for the Soviet artist. This painter has been named an Honored Art Worker of the Azerbaidzhan Republic.





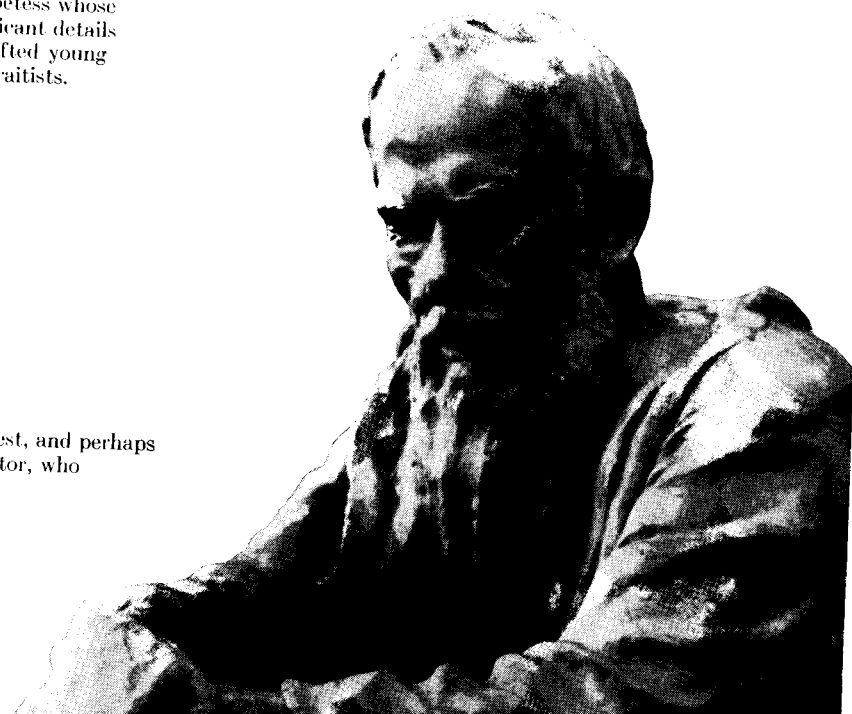


**15 GLAZUNOV: *People's Poetess Nikrassova***

A sensitive and perceptive portrait of a poetess whose verse lovingly describes the tiny but significant details of country life, by one of Russia's most gifted young artists, who ranks among the leading portraitists.

**16 KONENKOV: *Dostoevsky***

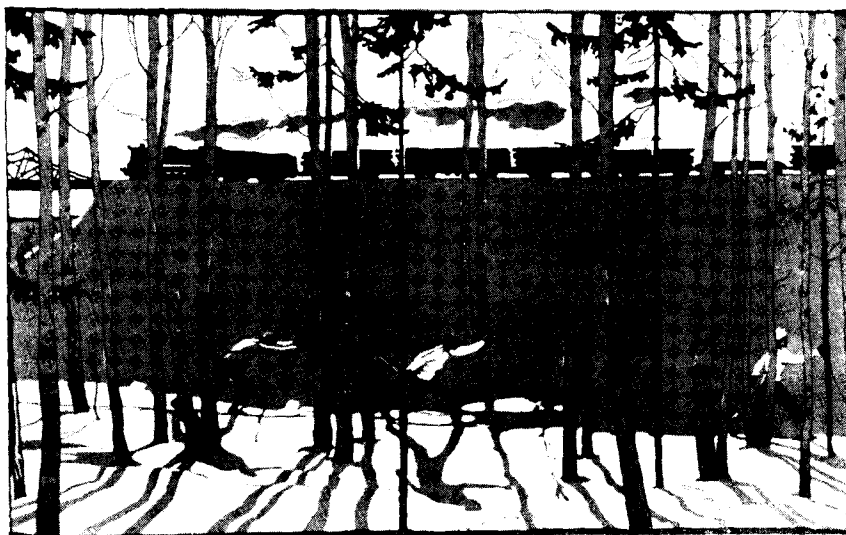
A discerning portrait in bronze by the greatest, and perhaps also the oldest, contemporary Russian sculptor, who has kept his vision and expression fresh by constant search and experiment.





**17 FAVORSKY: *Samar kand Donkeys***

Usually less self-conscious in approach and more varied in subject than paintings, contemporary Soviet prints most often express the traditional Russian enjoyment of the natural world.



**18 PONORMAEV: *The Day Out***

The popular themes of energetic sport and technical progress combined with the traditional motif of the birch grove, typical and almost symbolic of the Russian countryside.



## KONSTANTIN FEDIN

*This fall will mark the fiftieth anniversary of Tolstoy's death. The essay in appreciation of this great Russian writer is by KONSTANTIN FEDIN, the present head of the Union of Soviet Writers and a novelist whose books were influenced by his long sojourn in Western Europe, especially in Germany. Two volumes of his impressive post-war trilogy, **EARLY JOYS** and **NO ORDINARY SUMMER**, have been translated into English, and the third volume will shortly be published.*



## THE GENIUS OF LEO TOLSTOY

THE other night I picked up, quite by accident, Tolstoy's story "The Master and the Worker" in German translation, and having started reading it, I could not stop until I reached the end. I had read this story more than once before, and it seemed to me that I knew it word for word, so I was amazed to find so much that was unexpectedly new in it. I decided that the foreign language may have helped me to see aspects of the story I did not notice while reading it in Russian; good translations will often throw fresh light on a writer's work, even though they may obscure certain features of it.

Memory reminded me, however, that each time I have reread "The Master and the Worker" in Russian, I have been surprised by its force and have become as excited as if I were reading it for the first time. I think this happens every time I take up Tolstoy; the works that have been long familiar and carefully studied sound on the inner ear with the newness of previously unheard music, quickening the activity of the mind and the heart.

Why is it that rereading of Tolstoy continually refreshes our appreciation of his genius? Simply because the people he writes about are alive. They seem so to us because we see them in all their aspects, with their high and low ideas, their good and bad impulses, their kind and evil deeds. We clearly perceive their laughter, their joy, their tears, and their suffering, and we cannot help

*Drawing of Tolstoy by Repin.*

but live with them vicariously as we experience, while reading, the same gaiety or the same bitterness as we do in reality at the sight of tears and laughter.

There is no doubt that the fullness of our vision and the clarity of our perception depend on the depth with which Tolstoy unfolds the images of his heroes. But it is not immediately clear by what particular road Tolstoy leads us into the deep inner life of his heroes, and one must reflect for a long time in order to catch even the main techniques in Tolstoy's rendering of life.

I think that one of the basic devices which Tolstoy uses in creating an image is testing the moral value of his hero at the decisive point of life and death. This device stems from Tolstoy's philosophy concerning the meaning and content of life, and is inseparable from it.

In the story "The Master and the Worker," three deaths are depicted: the merchant's, the horse's, and the peasant's. The behavior of the merchant and the worker in the face of death reveals to the reader completely contrasting human characters, and beyond them, the contrasting world of owners and slaves. The story was written in 1895. Almost forty years before, in 1858, the young Tolstoy wrote a story, "Three Deaths," in which he also described the ending of absolutely different lives — a peasant driver, a lady, and a tree — and in which, in the behavior of the lady



and the peasant in the face of death, and in their essential conflict, the reader sees the two irreconcilable worlds.

I juxtapose the two stories because they present almost schematically in pure form the method, frequent with Tolstoy, of revealing the moral essence of the hero. Even before "Three Deaths," in Tolstoy's *Caucasia* and *Sevastopol* stories; later, in the greatest creation of his genius, *War and Peace*; and still later in the works written after "The Master and the Worker," Tolstoy was developing his ideas in much the same method. He seems to be saying to his heroes: Show me your attitude toward death — if death is natural, if it is forced, if you are asking for it, if it comes with good will, if it has been long awaited, if it is accidental; show me, and we shall then understand people such as yourself.

It is remarkable that a writer who was unsurpassed in depicting human happiness, love, joy, and youth could also apply so severe a method of distinguishing between the virtues and the vices of a human being. Tolstoy was compelled to do this because of his high regard for the moral strength of a human being. Not one of his beloved heroes is made to die a pitiful, unworthy death. On the contrary, in the last hour of their lives they seem to be even more elevated as they undergo the trial of death.

*War and Peace* is particularly noteworthy in this sense: the fate of all the leading characters is determined by a trial hitherto unimagined in the history of modern Russia. The highly complex plot gave Tolstoy unlimited possibilities for testing any person in the face of death. Indeed, the character of the whole nation was subjected to an examination, and how remarkably, with what force, that character emerges, that great giant of history — the Russian people!

All the principal heroes of this epic face the immediate peril of death on the battlefield or of falling victim to the enemies of their fatherland. And the strongest, the most fascinating heroes, whom the reader of *War and Peace* will remember forever, are those inseparably connected with its most moving, dramatic scenes: Rostov, Bolkonsky, Kutuzov, Natasha, Tushin, Pierre. What a glorious procession passes through our memory!

The problem of form, as such, did not exist for Tolstoy. He was convinced, and tried to convince fellow artists, that one must live the life of one's heroes, one must describe their inner sensations through vivid images, and then the heroes will act according to their character. He looked for, and found, the development and denouement of his plots in the inner thoughts of his characters and allowed them freedom to act in the only way

they could possibly act, given their particular inclinations. All the dramatis personae are alive in his pages precisely because the form and content of his works are indivisible.

Such artistry did not come to Tolstoy all at once. We have no other writer who worked over his books so persistently, with such zeal, alternating between satisfaction and despair over the results. The decade of labor on his strongest social novel, *Resurrection*, was filled with attempts to continue and decisions to give up writing it, until finally the passionate wish to bring the novel to an end overcame all doubts.

"The most difficult thing is to express in a word something you understand, in such a way that another person would understand you as you do yourself; and you always feel that you are far, far from reaching what you must and can do." Tolstoy jotted this down in his diary for 1890. To comprehend fully Tolstoy's reverence for words, one must realize that this comes from a man who has *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* behind him and who has started to work on *Resurrection*.

"In order to say what you have to say clearly, you should speak sincerely, and in order to speak sincerely you must put it just the way the thought came to you." This rule Tolstoy set for himself in an earlier diary, and he made a continuous effort not to break his own rule.

In his splendid introduction to the works of Maupassant, Tolstoy enumerates the necessary conditions for a "true artistic creation." Here he discloses what he means by his standard of sincerity for a writer. Sincerity, he believes, is a "genuine feeling of love or hatred toward the object the artist is depicting." In this same introduction he defines his conception of beauty of form as equivalent to "clarity of exposition."

Tolstoy's whole theory of writing can be reconstructed from his innumerable pronouncements on a writer's labor, on the form of the work, the technique of writing, on words, on style. His diaries, notebooks, and letters contain all his thoughts on the art of writing.

Leo Tolstoy represents a Russian school of literary art which arouses a great response in the whole world, because he treats of universal man. It is from this Russian school that Soviet literature draws its understanding of art and its inspiration for its new work about modern man.

Tolstoy will never become obsolete. He is one of those geniuses whose word is like spring water. The spring is inexhaustible. We come to it again and again, and it seems to us that we have never drunk such freshness.

Translated by Elena Zarudnaya.

## GRIGORY KOZINTSEV

*Born in 1905, GRIGORY KOZINTSEV has been one of the leading directors and experimenters in Soviet films. He organized studio FEX in 1932, and his important pre-war films included THE ADVENTURES OF AN OCTOBER CHILD, THE NEW BABYLON, and YOUTH OF MAXIM. He here describes his CinemaScope production of DON QUIXOTE.*



# The Making of RUSSIAN MOVIES

THE editor of the *Atlantic* kindly suggested that I begin with the story of my last film. I took his advice readily, but could not remember when the idea for my last film first came to me. Love is often the incentive in my work. You have only to love something a lot and you want to see it on the screen. And who can remember when he first fell in love with *Don Quixote*?

For the young reader, it is a small book. The mother reads it and explains the pictures. Who doesn't remember those illustrations? A sickly-looking horse, his legs contorted into a funny position, is charging a windmill; an emaciated rider is holding up a lance; a fat man is sitting on an ass with his hands over his head in horror. Then both the thin and the fat man are beaten by something with clubs and fists, and this is very funny because it is always funny when clowns get slapped around.

The reader grows up. The book grows up too. It now has many pages—two volumes. And suddenly this story ceases to be funny. There is much in the knight's story that is sad. People grow up and society changes. But the book changes along with the generations. Different aspects of heroes created a century ago are recurrently interesting. Hamlet, Faust, Don Quixote

*Drawing by Piskarev.*

still walk the face of the earth. They aren't simply characters in the history of literature, but they represent eternal thoughts and sufferings and hopes of mankind.

The situation in Cervantes's novel is amazingly simple. It can be put in a few sentences. A man is searching for justice. He is therefore thought to be mad. The methods with which he wants to help people are awkward, to be sure. But is every man mad who thinks he can help mankind? "And for this reason Cid Amet notes that, in his opinion, clowns are as mad as those they mimic," writes Cervantes, "and the zeal with which the duke and the duchess scoffed at the two fools shows them to be fools themselves."

In my office, opposite my writing desk hangs a Picasso drawing. The characters of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are portrayed by a kind of algebraic formula. Color masses and lines awaken a world of associations connected with these figures. In the sky over the knight and his squire shines a sun such as children draw: a circle with jagged rays of light. Looking at this drawing, I dreamed of a film in which the essence of the novel's philosophy would be lighted with the rays of childish fantasy.

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza were played

by two of our greatest artists, Nikolai Cherkasov and Yuri Tolubeev. They are my old friends. Tolubeev's portrayal of Polonius in *Hamlet* was for me a wonderful experience. Cherkasov had more than once donned the armor of the knight de la Manche. He played the role in the twenties in a performance for children; he danced it in a ballet production; he read monologues from it in a dramatization done by Mikhail Bulgakov. It must be said, though, in fairness to this excellent actor, that he did not simply repeat his stage performances in the film.

It seems to me that we did the film twice. At first a film lies hidden in the subconscious. Not one foot of film has been shot, but at your desk, or lying on the sofa, you see the screen light up; vague figures become distinct, the eyes of the heroes shine with life, their voices are heard. Then you can move on to the second film; you can start the cameras. All sorts of people step in to do all sorts of technical jobs, and often little is left of that first film that you shot in fantasy.

For six months, every day, for many hours, we — two actors and a director — locked ourselves in a room and shot that first film without film and without cameras. Seated in armchairs, we traveled around with our heroes. We traveled not only around La Manche but around the world of man's spirit. These were fascinating rehearsals. The actors spoke more softly than before the cameras; I had to act out all the other roles, including a lion, which was flattering, and Rosinante, which was less flattering.

The traditional contrast — the dreams of Don Quixote versus the reality of Sancho, or the contrast of heaven and earth — seemed too abstract and unsatisfactory. Sancho sets out voluntarily with Quixote; his supposed practicality brings him neither profit nor grief. The travelers instead compose a unity in which the exalted dreams of the people are mixed with the humor of daily life, the realistic entwined with the fantastic, the asceticism of El Greco combined with the uproarious mixture of a picaresque novel.

Daumier's illustrations did not seem right for Cervantes. When I thought of the hidalgo de la Manche, I pictured to myself a face half in shadow, as in an El Greco painting, elongated and passionate, with a road in the background on which the heroes of Lazarillo de Tormes wander.

OUR "Spain" was found in the Crimea. Against a background of the vast steppes, the artist Yevgeny Yenei built the hidalgo's home, Sancho's cabin, an old bell tower. We asked the Moscow Theater Romen — the Gypsy Theater — to take

part in the filming. The Gypsy actors were very close to the Spanish type. A cinema city grew up around the sets. We brought horses for the aristocratic court scenes, an ass for Sancho, and a lion from the Leningrad Zoo. A peculiar life began there on the steppes in a city where stone stairs were made of wood and cloth and the majority of windows and doors opened out on to nothing: a trainer worked privately with the lion; the actress playing a court lady trained a horse to take jumps; several Spaniards taught the children to play "Corrida." The consultants went to work in all seriousness, and Russian children became fascinated by bullfight phonograph records.

Rosinante was found in the neighboring town. Going through by car, the artist Yenei saw a horse so old that to watch it trying to gallop as it had in the old days was pitiful and, at the same time, funny. This was love at first sight; my friend leaped out of the car, and the career of yet another star was launched. They took the horse out of harness and acquainted it with a camera. It was a most difficult situation. Here was the player of an important role who was on the verge of death and who was still obliged to perform heroic feats: a battle with a windmill, a round with the Knight of the White Moon. And, alas, we couldn't forget the weight problem. This was very limiting. Who would forgive us a fat Rosinante?

Nor was it easy to get the appearance of the hidalgo right. Cherkasov was thin as a young man, but he has filled out with age, and he could now consider playing Falstaff. So we had to do an extraordinary thing: give Cherkasov's face a new body. Vladimir Vasiliev, a circus clown, had the ideal physical appearance for the role. In almost every scene we substituted Cherkasov for Vasiliev and vice versa. We were pretty nervous about this: suppose the audience discovered this trick of montage? But the experiment was successful. The Daumier silhouette about which the film critics wrote belongs to the talented circus actor. This is, of course, not a secret. Cherkasov in his memoirs acknowledged Vasiliev's part.

The director's work was complicated: I had to see to it that Rosinante didn't gain weight, that the lion didn't eat the performers, and that Cherkasov's head didn't separate from the clown's body. It was necessary to think of everything. While dozens of seamstresses were sewing costumes, men were searching the museums for ceramic dishes and candleholders. Librarians were doing research on sixteenth-century life, and a barber worked out the fiftieth variant of Don Quixote's mustache and beard. Tireless assistants wandered the streets of Leningrad stopping amazed passers-by with the request that they become temporary Spaniards.



And so six months of preparation and ten months of filming passed.

Don Quixote was my first wide-screen film. I do not find the advantages offered by CinemaScope attractive: the possibilities of filling up the great expanse with extras, of overwhelming the viewer with varied colors and all the special tricks of a de luxe film studio. On the contrary, I was interested in emptiness. It seemed to me that the philosophy of the work was expressed in the very emptiness of the world in which those two lonely figures wander. This emptiness had, as it were, two poles: the natural setting of burning, rust-colored steppes and hills; and then the cold emptiness of the duke's palace, the white plaster walls of the hall, a few court personages in the dark, carrying out their deadly ceremonials. A black-and-white sequence in a color film. And in this icy emptiness, a man suddenly finds himself overflowing with a ridiculous love of man, an absurd desire for justice.

THE generation to which I belong started out in the early twenties in an abandoned photography studio, which had the necessary orange-colored glass walls to make use of daylight. Leningrad Film Studios is today a block of contemporary buildings, built up on the spot occupied in czarist times by the Café Aquarium.

"We went, like Bedouins or gold prospectors," wrote Sergei Eisenstein in one of his articles, "into unexplored territory." We were all incredibly young. I did my first movie when I was not yet twenty-five. We had to work in a studio where coal sparks from the lamps often burned the actors and film fell out of antediluvian cameras and crumpled into an accordion shape which we called, for some reason, "cabbage."

The construction of the studios was begun, and the preparation of equipment; the situation changed rapidly and is today almost unrecognizable. All over the U.S.S.R. big film studios have been built; today Technicolor, wide-screen, stereophonic, panoramic films are being made.

It is hard not to take pleasure in the improvement of film technology, but there are other reasons for progress. Time passes quickly and technology is short-lived. There is a poster in a film museum in France which shows a woman dressed in a large hat and dress such as our grandmothers used to wear, standing with one elbow resting on a wooden box which sits on a tripod. There is film in the box. At her feet is an old-fashioned gramophone. The poster is called "Theater's Phono-Film."

An old review from a 1900 issue of *Figaro*

is quoted: "Thanks to the collaboration of two modern miracles—cinematography and the phonograph—amazingly perfect results have been achieved. The artists, after sitting elegantly for their portraits in front of the movie theater, can go inside and see themselves on the screen, hear their own voices, and even the applause which they would hear were they actually on stage." The poster and the joy of the reviewer have to do with the première of the movie *Hamlet*, in which Sarah Bernhardt played. The Shakespearean tragedy has been done more than once in the films; filmings even took place in Elsinore, the quality of film got better, but still the equipment and all those "modern miracles" quickly became archaic, antediluvian curiosities.

However, time has done nothing to the play itself, written three and a half centuries ago. The suffering and anger of the Danish prince continue to be moving. *Hamlet* finally came to life on the screen not because of technical perfection but thanks to the art of Laurence Olivier. Neither the producers' expense nor technically produced sensations can, by themselves, move the viewer.

At the International Exhibition at Brussels a show was organized of the best films of all time. Twelve films chosen by film historians were shown in the main auditorium. The jury was supposed to award a gold medal, but they could come to no agreement; the grand prize was not awarded. The majority of the votes went to *The Battleship Potemkin*, *Yellow Jack*, *Mother*, *The Bicycle Thief*, *Joan of Arc*, and *Grand Illusion*.

For the most part, these films were silent, black and white, and done without the benefit of modern technology. Their excellence lay in the passion of the artist and the truth of creation.

It is in vain that students of the film write that cinematography came into being with the invention of the close-up and montage. Stereopticons were transformed into art when "living photography" made humanity come to life on the screen.

I am the last person to undervalue the techniques of cinematography. I believe in their potential, but only the force of art can bring this potential to life. This is worth writing about because it too often happens that standardized products come off the conveyor belt of world-famous companies when money and technology are substituted for the thought and conscience of the artist. Paradoxical as it may seem, the perfection of technique when not subordinated to content is a step backward for the movies, a return to that era of mechanical stereopticons, which were superseded by living photography. The quality of the equipment and the scope of the enterprise do not change the heart of the matter.

The problem of the artist continues to be as simple and as complicated as it ever was. Shakespeare defined the problem well: "To show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." It does not pay to call these thoughts old-fashioned. The ends of art are not so changeable as fashions. Of course, to show the form of the time requires special methods in every epoch; the very essence of historic processes is changing, and some of the ancient forms of art are powerless to convey this essence.

Sergei Eisenstein was one of the greatest initiators. He showed that the people's struggle for justice could be contained in every element of the film. The sweep of history in all its fullness was in *The Battleship Potemkin*. Everything which this artist touched took on life and spirit: the ocean, the ships, the streets — all became active, meaningful, and evocative of life.

Even marble lions could not withstand the white heat of his passion. Eisenstein made them spring and made their marble jaws gape with deafening roars. Cinematography knew how to entertain; Eisenstein taught it to astound. He created new epic forms. Through his protagonists, thousands of ordinary people became the heroes of contemporary tragedies.

This was not the only path in the development of Soviet film art. There is the work of Vsevolod Pudovkin, who dealt not with men collectively but with man as an individual — the old woman in the workers' suburbs in *Mother*; a peasant coming into the city to work in *The End of Saint Petersburg* — work which preserved the character of these people and the details of their fates.

Simultaneously with the production of films in the rhetorical vein, films were produced which discussed reality in everyday language. In *Chapaev*, which came out in the thirties, conflicts were stressed not just in mass struggles but also in the development of character. Alexander Dovzhenko revealed the world of folk poetry in his films; special Ukrainian humor made his wise old peasants come alive, and contemporaries we could recognize appeared in his films.

The generations changed. Students quarreled frequently with their teachers. More and more attention was given to ordinary people and everyday events. But our artists did not consider ordinary people mediocre, and the diurnal did not become the banal.

During the era of the silent films, the art of painting greatly influenced direction. The majority of our directors were either artists or stage designers. From the beginning of the talkies, however, the art of the novel and prose has had more influence. Literariness, in the highest sense,

accuracy, and clarity of a realistic story are more attractive now than the beauties of light distribution, foreshortening, and complexity of montage.

On the screens the world over have appeared recently *The Forty-first*, *The House I Live In*, *The Cranes Are Flying*, and *Quiet Flows the Don*. In these films contemporary life is pictured — the war years, the civil war, and the fates of ordinary people. These pictures differ in theme and style from the earlier ones.

I WANT particularly to speak about the movie *The Fate of a Man*, which is based on the story by Mikhail Sholokhov. This is the story of a soldier who lost everything during the last war: family, home, and freedom. Prisoner of war, fallen into the hell of a Nazi concentration camp, he lived through countless sorrows but emerged victorious. He was victorious not because of his bravery but because of the strength of his soul and conscience. The direction pays great attention to the thoughts and feelings of the simple man, and the scenes of life during the war years are overwhelmingly powerful. This was the first performance of Sergei Bondarchuk, who played the role of the soldier, a truck driver. There were millions of such men.

Not long ago I was in Mexico with a group of Soviet cinematographers for a film festival. *The Fate of a Man* was shown in an open-air auditorium which was filled with several thousand spectators. I love this film and was moved by the reaction of the Mexicans, who did not know actual war as we knew it, when it brought grief into every home and every family.

On the screen was a cloudy Russian sky, an elderly man in a shabby quilted jacket walking along a ruined military highway, a child — an orphan — holding his hand. As they walked along, I remembered the frightful war and hard victory. And over the screen were the tropical sky and moon, a moon so unlike the Russian, which looked like an overturned cup on black velvet. And suddenly an ovation broke out in the auditorium, just like the ovation I had heard at the Moscow premiere of the film.

Flash bulbs flashed, and the lights turned on Sergei Bondarchuk, seated in the loge. And it seemed to me that I saw, standing next to the talented artist, accepting the ovation, a short, stocky figure with a broad forehead and bristly hair on end — Sergei Eisenstein, as I remember him. And I saw the impetuous Vsevolod Pudovkin and a man with beautiful silver hair and proudly uplifted head, Alexander Dovzhenko.

Cinematographic art, through its ability to record time, can keep people young, can conquer death. It preserves the human warmth of its

creators. The body of Gerard Philippe, dressed in the costume of the Cid according to his last will and testament, lies underground, but the gay-hearted Fanfan la Tulippe will smile from the screen for a long time to come. The warmth is transferred from artist to artist. Art is collective strength. An excellent film is not only a triumph of the cinematographer but a triumph of cinematography.

Of course, there is more than one road in art; the multitude of paths stretch out in every direction. A film can make you laugh, can carry you away with the skill and daring of the heroes. A film can carry a Tchaikovsky opera with the best singers from the capital into the farthest little community; Galina Ulanova can dance in a hill town where there is no theater but only an occasional movie. Soviet cinematography has made no small number of such films, and their cultural importance cannot be overestimated.

Last year a world-wide film festival opened in a theater behind the Kremlin walls. We were very happy to see artists of other lands in our country. Somewhere in Moscow I met Guilletta Masina. Her *Nights of Cabiria* was arousing great interest. Frederico Fellini, who directed this production, was not afraid to depict life in extraordinarily harsh and crude terms. I think he was within his rights. There is a lot of sweetness on the international market. The taste of truth unavoidably is often bitter. It is hard to forget the end of this film: Cabiria, deprived of all her illusions, is walking along a road lined with olive trees, and she suddenly hears a guitar and a simple song; a crowd of young people instantly surrounds the unhappy girl, and a smile breaks out on Guilletta's face — no, not a smile, but the shadow of a smile; hope has touched her lips and poetic humanism lights up her face.

A West German director named Kurt Hoffman received one of the most important prizes at this festival. *We Are Wonderful* was very unlike the work of the Italian artists. The old form of world theater had undergone modernization. The authors compared life on the screen with life in reality. The only difference was that the mechanism was history in the second case. Two actors, seated in the orchestra of the theater, accompanied the actions on the screen with their comments. One thinks of Bertholt Brecht: the free movement from subject to subject, the straightforward propaganda, the shift from reality to satiric hyperbole. These comments in no way distracted from the reality of the story about two

school children who grew up during the rise and collapse of fascism.

Unfortunately, American cinematographers did not take part in this festival. It would have been most interesting to see the newest work of Hollywood and to get acquainted with our American colleagues. *War and Peace* was a great success in the Soviet Union. Audrey Hepburn was able to depict an image which was close to Russian moviegoers, and this was far from easy, since we all have had our own Natasha Rostov in our hearts for a long time. Henry Fonda was physically unlike Beukhov, but his performance was so dignified and it so well created the inner man that the physical appearance lost importance. We found *The Bachelor Party* and *Marty* very interesting. These pictures, marked by serious thinking about contemporary life, were stories about ordinary people.

Not long ago it was my great pleasure to present a delegation from the United States to our moviegoers. Leningraders gave Gary Cooper, Edward G. Robinson, and Delbert Mann a warm reception. Thanks to their films, these were old friends, whose hands we were able to shake for the first time. Tatyana Samoilova is currently holding forth in Washington theaters, and Betsy Blair is meeting Moscovites in *Marty*. Moscow friends told me about Gregory Peck's successful visit to our capital for the premiere of *On the Beach*.

The film exchange has begun.

Airplanes, which fly very fast these days, carry several not large, not heavy boxes. In these are just rolls of film. But this light-sensitive substance can reflect the thoughts, feelings, and hopes of a people. And if this substance is turned into a movie, a product of art, not only the artist but a people speak from the screen. It is good that our peoples have begun such a conversation.

At the beginning of this article I spoke of traveling along the roads of La Manche: I should like now to finish by returning to Quixote. The wind in the Crimea has already blown down the fences which protected the sixteenth-century Spanish homes, and grass has grown over the place where Don Quixote's mansion stood. The lion has returned to his home in the Leningrad Zoo, and Nikolai Cherkasov is playing new dramatic roles. But a skinny dreamer is wandering around from movie theater to theater in search of justice. And someday, perhaps, he will get to America. If this happens, I ask the noble hidalgo, please, to relay to American moviegoers the best wishes of Soviet cinematographers.

Translated by Gabriella Azrael.





# A JAR OF JAM

BY VALENTIN KATAEV

*A novelist and playwright, Valentin Kataev has a happy gift for writing about childhood and adolescence. His early novels, THE EMBEZZLERS, TIME, FORWARD!, and THE LONE WHITE SAIL, have been published in American editions, and his comedy of student life in Moscow, SQUARING THE CIRCLE, has been produced on the American stage and television. He is the editor and founder of YOUTH magazine, with a circulation of more than four hundred thousand readers.*

PETYA had never prepared his own homework at the gymnasium as carefully as he prepared for the lesson with Gavrik. This was his first try at being a teacher, and he was determined not to fail. He tortured his father with endless questions on comparative linguistics. He copied important things out of the encyclopedic dictionary, *Brockhaus and Efron*. At school, his demands for detailed elucidation of several paragraphs of Latin syntax amazed the Latin teacher, who had not previously been too impressed with Petya's diligence. Petya sharpened several pencils, got out pens and ink, and after wiping off the writing table with a rag, set down his brother Pavlik's globe, his own microscope, and placed at random several fat volumes which were supposed to lend a stern academic tone to the place and inspire in Gavrik a respect for science.

After dinner Vasily Petrovich went to the cemetery. Auntie and Pavlik went to see the exhi-

*Drawing by Charushin.*

bition. Dunyasha asked permission to visit relatives. This was all fine with Petya. When he was alone he paced the floor like a real teacher, hand on hip, going over the introductory part of his first lesson. You couldn't say that he was nervous, but he experienced that sharp sensation that a skater feels before going on the ice.

Gavrik didn't make him wait. He appeared exactly at the appointed hour. It was interesting that he did not come, as he always had in childhood, to the back door and through the kitchen, after having given a warning whistle with four fingers from the courtyard. Instead, Gavrik talked on the house phone from the front entrance, greeted Petya formally, and after taking off his old overcoat in the vestibule, combed his hair in front of the mirror. Before going into the living room he straightened his satin peasant blouse with the tiny pearl buttons. He was holding a new five-kopeck notebook with a red blotter sticking out of it and a new pencil. Silently Petya showed his friend into the room and sat him down at the writing table, between the microscope and the globe. Gavrik gazed at them worriedly.

"Well, let's begin," said Petya sternly, but he suddenly became embarrassed.

He manfully controlled the fit of shyness and cheerfully began again. "Let's begin. The Latin language is one of the richest and mightiest in the Indo-European family of languages. Originally like the Umbrian and the Oscan dialects, it belonged to the group of major dialects of the non-Etruscan population of central Italy, like the dialect of the inhabitants of the plains of Latium, out of which the Romans came. Do you understand?"

"No," said Gavrik, shaking his head.

"What don't you get?"

"Which were the major dialects of the non-Etruscan population?" Gavrik brought out carefully, looking sadly at Petya.

"Ah-ha. Good. You'll understand. It's just that you're not used to it. For now, we'll go on. So, at that time, since the languages of the other Italian peoples — well, the Etruscan, Japhetic, Ligurian, all obvious except for the Latin relatives, the Umbrians and the Sabellians — remained just dialects, locked, so to speak, in the limits of a more or less crowded area. . . ." Petya made a grandiose professorial gesture to show that, while the languages of the other people of Italy remained isolated dialects, Latin, thanks to the Romans, not only became the governing language of Italy but also gradually became even a literary language. Petya meaningfully raised his finger. "Do you understand?"

"No," repeated the despondent Gavrik and again shook his head. "It would be better if you just showed me the alphabet, Petya."

"Who's the tutor here — me or you?"

"O.K. So it's you."

"In that case, let's go on," said Petya, pacing the room, enjoying his superiority over Gavrik and his power as a teacher. "So, in general, then, this literary and classical language, Latin, in about three hundred years lost its control and became, you know, instead of the national language, and so forth, and so on, became — in a word — not so important." Gavrik nodded approvingly. "What was important, my friend, was that in the end it turned out that the Latin language had twenty letters at the beginning and then they added three more."

"Is that all it became — twenty-three letters?" Gavrik asked quickly and joyfully.

"Exactly twenty-three letters in all."

"Which?"

"Don't go putting the cart before the horse," said Petya, using the traditional saying of the Latin teacher at school, whom he always unconsciously imitated. "The letters of the Latin alphabet are the following — now write — *A, B, C*. . . ."

Rousing himself and taking his pencil, Gavrik began to write in his notebook with beautiful handwriting.

"Wait a minute, crazy, what are you doing? You can't write a Russian *B*. You've got to write a Latin *B*."

"How do you write the Latin *B*?"

"Like the Russian *V*. See?"

"What's so hard about that?"

"So erase and write it right."

Gavrik got from the pocket of his wide woolen pants a hunk of carefully wrapped half-used eraser

in the form of an elephant and erased the Russian *B* with the remaining end of the elephant and wrote a Latin *B* in its place.

"I guess," said Petya, who had already become pretty much bored with teaching, "you can copy the Latin alphabet right out of the book while I rest a little."

**G**AVRIK began to copy, and Petya began to stretch his legs. He strolled around the apartment and found himself in front of the cupboard in the dining room. As everyone knows, cupboards are particularly attractive to young boys. It's a rare boy who can pass a cupboard and not look to see what's in it. Petya was no exception, especially since Auntie had unwisely said as she went out, "And, please, don't get into the cupboard."

Petya knew perfectly well what Auntie had in mind: the large jar of strawberry jam which Grandmother from Ekaterinoslav had sent for Christmas. They hadn't opened the jam yet, although it was sent for the holidays and the holidays were already over, which annoyed Petya a little. In general it was hard to understand Auntie. On the whole she was good and generous, but she was completely miserly on the subject of jam. With her around, it was terrible even to mention jam. Her eyes would get big and frightened, and she would say quickly and nervously, "Oh, no, not on your life. Don't even go near it. When the time comes, I'll give you some jam."

But when the time would come, no one knew, because she didn't say and only waved her hands frighteningly. And it was stupid, too, because jam was made to be eaten, after all!

Stretching, Petya opened the cupboard, climbed up on a chair, and peeped onto the very top shelf, where the full jar of Ekaterinoslav jam stood, heavy as a bombshell. After feasting his eyes on the jam, Petya shut the cupboard and went to see how his pupil was getting along. Gavrik had been diligently working on his Latin letters and had already got up to *N*, but did not know how to write it. Petya showed him how to make the *N*, complimented him on his accuracy, and casually commented, "By the way, Grandmother sent us a jar of strawberry jam for Christmas. A six-pound jar."

"There aren't any jars that big."

"There aren't?" Petya smiled ironically.

"No, there aren't."

"A lot you know about jars," Petya muttered. He went into the dining room and came back and put the heavy jar on the table between the globe and the microscope. "Well? What do you say? Are there six-pound jars?"

"O.K., you win." Gavrik turned back to his

notebook and wrote three more Latin letters: *O*, which is written exactly as in Russian; *P*, which is written like the Russian *R*; and the strange letter *Q*, whose tail is so hard to make.

"Good boy!" said Petya, and, hesitating a little, added, "By the way, do you want to try some jam?"

"Sure," Gavrik agreed. "Your aunt won't mind?"

"We'll just have a spoonful apiece and she won't even notice." Petya went to get a teaspoon and then patiently unscrewed the tight lid, carefully removed the top piece of paper, which looked like a hat, and even more carefully took off the layer of wax. Under the layer of wax, sealed in rum to preserve the jam as long as possible, was the jam itself, bright and shiny, right up to the brim of the jar. With the greatest care, Petya and Gavrik each ate a spoonful.

Grandmother from Ekaterinoslav was renowned as a master of any kind of jam, and strawberry jam was her specialty, but this jam was truly remarkable. Neither Gavrik nor even Petya had ever tasted anything like it. It was fragrant, thick, and somehow light as air, full of whole tender choice berries with delicious sunflower seeds scattered in it. It was incredibly easy to eat.

The friends took turns in licking the spoon clean and were overjoyed to find that the jam in the jar stayed the same: the jar was full to the brim, as before. Of course, some sort of law was at work here, of large and small quantities — the large volume of the jar and the small volume of the teaspoon — but since Petya and Gavrik did not know this law, it seemed to them practically miraculous that the jam wasn't disappearing.

"It's the same as before," said Gavrik.

"I told you she wouldn't notice."

With these words, Petya covered the jam with the layer of wax, then the little paper hat, tightly screwed on the lid just as it had been before, and put the jar back in the cupboard in its proper place.

Meanwhile, Gavrik managed to write two more Latin letters: *R*, which made him smile because it was just like a Russian letter reversed, and the double-faced Latin *S*.

"Very good!" complimented Petya. "By the way, I think we could both easily take another spoonful."

"Of what?"

"Jam."

"And your aunt?"

"Stupid, you yourself saw that the amount of jam stayed the same. That means that if we try one more spoonful, there will still be the same. Right?"

Gavrik thought and agreed. You can't argue with what your eyes tell you.

Petya brought the jar, patiently unscrewed the lid, carefully took off the paper, removed the layer of wax, feasted his eyes on the jam, which glistened, as before, right up to the brim. Then the friends each took a spoonful, licked it clean, and Petya fixed the jar as it had been.

But this time, while the jam tasted even better, the taste lasted a shorter time.

"Look, see — again, it's just the same!" Petya said with satisfaction, lifting the heavy jar.

"No, it isn't," said Gavrik. "There's just the tiniest bit missing now. I looked on purpose."

Petya raised the jar and looked at it. "What do you mean? Nothing's wrong. The jam is the same. Absolutely the same."

"Not absolutely," said Gavrik. "Because the jam doesn't cover the edge of the paper any more. Look and see for yourself."

Petya lifted the feathered edge of the paper and held the jar up to the light. The jar was almost as full as it had been. *Almost*, but not quite. A gap no wider than a hair had appeared, but it was a gap. This was too bad, though you couldn't tell whether or not Auntie would notice. Petya took the jar into the dining room and put it back on the shelf.

"Well, let's see what you have been scribbling there," he said cheerfully.

Instead of answering, Gavrik scratched his neck and sighed.

"You tired?" asked Petya.

"No, but I think your aunt will notice, even though just a little bit is missing."

"She won't notice."

"I bet she will, and then you'll get it."

Petya burst out, "So what if she does! Let her! Grandmother sent the jam for everyone, and I'm within my rights. When a fellow comes to my house to work, can't I treat him to some strawberry jam? I'm going to bring the jam here, and we're going to have some more. I'm sure Auntie won't say anything. She'll be glad that we were open about it, and not sneaky."

"Maybe it's not worth it?" Gavrik asked timidly.

"Of course it's worth it!" Petya exclaimed.

He brought the jar, and feeling that he was doing a pure and a noble thing, he scooped out two soup-*spoonfuls* of jam.

"That's enough," he said finally, and screwed up the lid and took the jar back to the cupboard.

But it wasn't enough. Having had a full *soup-*spoon* apiece*, the friends had really dug into the wonderful jam and felt such a great, uncontrollable urge to eat just one more spoonful that Petya, with a serious face, brought the jar and, not looking at Gavrik, took one more *soup-*spoonful**. Petya couldn't imagine how a *soup-*spoon** could take away so much. Looking at the jar in



the light, he saw that at least one third of the jam was gone.

The boys each ate another portion and licked the spoons.

"Wonderful!" said Gavrik, and wrote out the Latin letters *T*, *U*, *V*, and *X*, still feeling the greatest urge to have just a bit more of that remarkable jam.

"O.K.," said Petya with finality. "Let's eat half the jar, and that's all."

At the halfway point, Petya screwed on the lid for the last time and took the jar to the cupboard with the firm intention not to touch it again. He tried not to think of Auntie.

"So, are you full?" he asked Gavrik with a pale smile.

"A little too full," answered Gavrik, tasting the sweetness in his mouth which was already turning sour.

Petya also began to feel sick. Ecstasy had already, bit by bit, begun to change into its opposite number. He didn't want to think about the jam, but — and this was scary — he couldn't *not* think about it. The jam avenged itself by arousing a slightly sickish feeling at the same time that it aroused the crazy, unnatural desire for one more spoonful. You couldn't fight the desire. Petya, like a madman, went into the dining room, and the two friends began to eat the nauseating sweet-stuff by the spoonful straight out of the jar, losing all comprehension of what they were doing. It was hatred become adoration and adoration become hatred. Their mouths were puckered by the sweet-sour taste. Sweat broke out on their foreheads. The jam could barely get past their convulsively constricted throats. But they ate and ate as if it were cereal. They weren't really eating the jam. They were destroying it like an enemy. They came to again when there was only one drop left at the bottom of the jar, which they couldn't reach with their spoons.

Only then did Petya understand the horror of what had happened. Like criminals who try to hide all traces of their crime as quickly as possible, the boys ran to the kitchen and began feverishly to rinse the sticky jar under the faucet, not forgetting to drink from the jar the dark, sweet water.

When the jar was clean and dry, Petya put it back very accurately, for some reason, in its old place in the cupboard, as if this would fix everything. Petya tried to console himself with the silly hope that Auntie had forgotten about Grandmother's jam or that when she saw the clean jar she would think they had eaten it long ago. But he knew that this was stupid, to say the least.

Trying not to look at each other, Petya and Gavrik returned to the writing table and resumed the lesson.

"So," said Petya, cramped with nausea and speaking with difficulty, "out of the twenty-three letters of the Latin alphabet we have written twenty. Afterward, historically, two more letters were introduced."

"In all, twenty-five," said Gavrik, swallowing his saliva with disgust.

"Exactly. Now write."

Just then Vasily Petrovich came home. In the melancholy, peace-loving mood which always came on him after being at the cemetery, he looked around the room and at the diligently working boys, and noting on their faces a badly hidden and strangely disgusted expression, said, "Well, gentlemen, working on Sunday? Is it hard? Never mind. The roots of learning are bitter, but the fruits are sweet." With these words he tiptoed, so as not to disturb the boys, to the icon. From his pocket he drew a small bottle of oil that he had bought at the church store near Afonsky Gate and set to work cleaning the lamp carefully, just as he did every Sunday.

Auntie came home soon, and then Dunyasha; only Pavlik was still out. The samovar began to roar in the kitchen. The light clatter of tea dishes began to come from the dining room.

"Well, I'm going," said Gavrik, collecting his belongings hurriedly. "I'll get the rest of the letters myself at home somehow. Good luck. See you next Sunday!" And off he went, with anxious, uncertain step through the dining room, past the cupboard, to the vestibule.

"Where are you going?" Auntie asked. "Stay and have tea."

"Thank you, Tatyana Ivanovna, they're waiting for me at home. I have to do my chores."

"Maybe you'll just have one small cup of tea? With strawberry jam?"

"Ah, no! Please!" exclaimed Gavrik, frightened, and whispering "I owe you fifty kopecks" to Petya in the vestibule, he ran quickly down the stairs and was gone.

"What's that wry face all about?" asked Auntie, looking at Petya. "It looks as if you ate some bad sausage. Maybe you're sick. Let's see your tongue."

Despondently raising his head, the boy showed his remarkably rosy tongue.

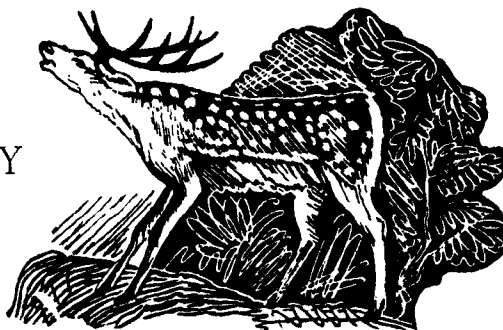
"Ah-ha. I understand," said Auntie. "Latin did this to you. You see, my friend, how difficult it is to be a tutor. Never mind. Now, in honor of your first lesson, we'll open Grandmother's jam, and everything will be all right."

With these words Auntie went to the cupboard, and Petya lay down on his bed and covered his head with a pillow in order not to see or hear anything more.

*Translated by Gabriella Azrael.*

# THE YOUNG COMPOSERS

BY BORIS YARUSTOVSKY



*During the visit to America of a delegation of Soviet composers in the fall of 1959, a discussion with American composers was broadcast by the National Broadcasting Company on November 23, 1959, on the subject broadly designated as "The Creative Composer." The Soviet participants were Dmitri Shostakovich, Tikhon Khrennikov, Dmitri Kabalevsky, Konstantin Dankevich, Fikret Amirov, and Boris Yarustovsky. The American participants were Roy Harris, Howard Hanson, Alan Shulman, and Ulysses Kay. Nicolas Slonimsky was the moderator and translator.*

*Frank opinions were exchanged between the two groups. Ulysses Kay, an outstanding Negro composer who had visited the Soviet Union in 1958, remarked that he had an "impression of sameness" from Soviet music, and added: "The question is, Does this condition grow out of the Soviet composers' preoccupation with national idioms in their works?"*

*The following article by Boris Yarustovsky, professor of music at Moscow University, cast in the form of an open letter to Ulysses Kay, endeavors to clarify the problems facing young Soviet composers.*

You remember, of course, my dear Ulysses, the meeting of a group of American composers with Soviet composers and the round-table discussion at the RCA Building in New York. This was a very friendly and warm talk. Many important and deeply felt thoughts were voiced on both sides regarding the role of art in humanistic education, the significance of great and moving ideas in musical composition, the essential bond between the language of music and national traditions.

Howard Hanson was profoundly correct when  
*Wood engraving by Favorsky.*

he said, "In this age of science and technology, music must be utilized to bring beauty into the world." Roy Harris was correct, too, in saying that one cannot write important symphonies by sucking his thumb and that music must have its basis in great ideas generated by life itself. It was at that point that you, Ulysses, remarked that Soviet music produces the impression of sameness. Frankly, for us this remark was rather unexpected; it had little connection with the logic of our discussion, with the trend of our thoughts. Our reaction became even more intense since you failed to offer any evidence to support your opinion. Naturally, we'd like to find out what particular Soviet works gave you reason for such a conclusion. After all, it is quite possible that we ourselves are not aware of this sameness.

Since returning from our stimulating tour in the United States, we have already held two important plenary meetings in Moscow. One of them was devoted to the creative production of young composers, and the second to the subject of music in the contemporary world. Such discussions and auditions of new music attract not only the Moscow critics and composers but also many guests from different corners of our land.

I cannot say that the listeners were satisfied with every single work presented to them. No, the Soviet public is justified in making serious demands on our composers. We still have but few operas depicting Soviet life. Also, the creative harvest of our song composers is somewhat meager this season.

And yet, as we listened to numerous concerts of works by young and established composers, Russians and Georgians, Ukrainians and Estonians, symphonic composers and contributors to the musical stage, we could not help rejoicing in the diversity of the creative output of our great family of Soviet composers. It was then that I suddenly recalled your remark about the sameness in our music, my dear Ulysses. And again I was convinced that your contention was unjustified. Of course, Soviet music is not perfect, and our composers have a lot to accomplish before they can satisfy the multifarious demands of our own listeners and listeners abroad. Nonetheless, our plenary session of last year uncovered a veritable gold mine of creative individual talents and a genuine wealth of creative diversity.

I SHOULD like to acquaint my American readers with some names new to them. Such blank spots on the map of Soviet music, as observed from America, are many, as we found out during our American tour, although the repertory of American symphony orchestras and individual performers contains a great number of Soviet works. For this we owe them our gratitude.

Let me state at once that we understand the necessity for performing more American music in the Soviet Union. The more knowledge we acquire of the culture and art of your nation and mine, and what they have to tell us about life in the Soviet Union and the United States, the more firm is the conviction that our peoples will continue to live in peace and friendship.

And now, let us return to the names of Soviet composers who are new or almost new to America.

Let me introduce to you first of all the name of Georgy Sviridov, a remarkably talented pupil of Shostakovich. He is totally unknown in America, but his music certainly merits performance in the United States. Musical Moscow is full of talk about his most recent work, *Oratorio Pathétique*, which has been mentioned for a Lenin Prize. It is a genuinely bold concept, as evidenced in the use of poems by Vladimir Mayakovsky for its text, for these poems are extremely complex in rhythm and unconventional in structure. A number of composers before Sviridov had tried to set Mayakovsky's poems to music, but their attempts were unsuccessful. Sviridov was not deterred by their experience. After he had completed a large musical fresco for chorus and orchestra, *To the Memory of Sergei Yesenin*, he turned to Mayakovsky.

In the *Oratorio Pathétique*, Sviridov makes use of selections from different poems by Mayakovsky.

The work opens with thunderous sonorities of the orchestra and chorus, to the words of the famous *Left March*. The calls to action of the narrator singing, "Left! Left!" are punctuated by sharp, impulsive responses of the metrically scanning chorus and orchestra. The mass procession reaches its climax when the giant power of the organ is added to the tremendous orchestral ensemble (the score calls for eight horns, six trumpets, and six trombones). Here, at the summit, this sonorous avalanche is suddenly brought to a halt, and from afar, like an echo, a funeral chant is heard.

Against the background of this funeral psalmody, the singing narrator enters once more; the sudden contrast is necessary in order to make a sharp transition in the dramatic plan. The picture of a revolutionary procession is followed by the chronicle of the downfall of the last bulwark of the White Army, the army of General Wrangel. Sviridov makes use of the peculiar resources of the oratorio form with extraordinary skill, in order to shift the action to an entirely different scene; the pointed and flexible recitative of the narrator, to the text of Mayakovsky's poem *Khorosho*, is ended by an expressionistic outburst, when the commander in chief of the White Army falls on his knees with a cry of despair and then flees Russia under the constant pressure of the Red Army.

Equally inventive is the fifth movement of the oratorio, *A Garden City Will Grow Here*. This, too, tells a dramatic story, but on a quite different subject. Sviridov uses Mayakovsky's imagery to create a highly colorful musical scene: against the patter of the rain, workers seeking shelter under a shed talk about the beautiful garden city to be built here soon. Murmurs and the soft sound of the falling raindrops are pictured in varied orchestral timbres, while the ingeniously contrived small talk of the chorus is projected upon this background. In the middle of this movement, like some spectacular tide of the future, in the chords of the brass, in the powerful pulse of the orchestra, emerges the image of Siberia in construction, so vivid that we can almost see the scaffolding of the grandiose structures. In the recapitulation, the bewitching lyrical dream of a garden city is invoked once again.

The central motif of the sixth movement is a heart-to-heart talk with Lenin, in which the narrator, thinking aloud, addresses himself to the portrait of the great leader of the Russian Revolution. This is followed by the grand finale, based on selections from the poem entitled "An Extraordinary Adventure that Vladimir Mayakovsky Had One Summer in the Country." The sun addresses itself to the poet, inviting him to join it in illuminating the course of people's lives. "Come, poet, let us soar like an eagle, let us sing!"



the sun exclaims. Sviridov's music utilizes all available means in order to create the feeling of space flooded with sunlight. To the massive sonority of the orchestra and the organ there is added a vibrant pealing of bells, and the voice of the narrator brings the oratorio to a conclusion with Mayakovsky's words: "To shine always, to shine everywhere, such is my slogan, and the sun's!"

It is difficult to overpraise Sviridov's oratorio. It is unmistakably modern in its musical language. In it are boldly brought together the most varied resources: scenes that are almost theatrical, choral polyphony, symphonic interludes, and simple melodies. Rumbling sounds, murmurs, whispers, reverberations, lamentations are reproduced in interesting and novel instrumental colors. And integrating the entire work is the singing narrator, embodying the mighty figure of the Poet of the Revolution, Mayakovsky himself. Perhaps Sviridov's greatest accomplishment in this oratorio is that he has been able to find for Mayakovsky's dynamic, but at times angular, verses the means of melodic realization, colored in rich national tones. Sviridov is undoubtedly one of the most talented lyric composers. He has an extremely fine feeling for Russian melody, not only in its ancient peasant form but in its contemporary aspect.

QUITE different tone color infuses another important work in Soviet music, the suite for voice and orchestra, *The Path of Poets*, by the Georgian composer Otar Taktakishvili. It speaks of the destinies of the people of Georgia. The textual basis of the work suggests an anthology of Georgian poetry, comprising verses ranging from the classical Georgian poet Vazha Pshaveli to the contemporary poets Irakly Abashidze and Galaktion Tabidze. It is a cycle of poetic tableaux, impressive in their imaginative lyrical quality, emotionally rich harmonies, and brilliant orchestral palette. The dramatic development of Taktakishvili's work is astutely built on contrasting alternations of dramatic and lyric images, permeated by a profound patriotic feeling. The suite is concluded by a triumphant song of collective endeavor. *The Path of Poets* had excellent success at a concert of the plenary session in the series "Music and the Present Day."

Another Soviet composer of Sviridov's generation is Kara Karaev of Azerbaidzhan. Until quite recently, the people of Azerbaidzhan had no professional standards of musical culture. Now a young, strong school of composers is active in Azerbaidzhan. Its leaders are Kara Karaev and Fikret Amirov. American audiences had an opportunity to become acquainted with Amirov and

his music during the tour of Soviet composers to the United States in November, 1959.

Kara Karaev studied with Shostakovich. He is a brilliant musician, well versed in modern symphonic technique. Among his works are two ballets, *The Seven Beauties*, after the national epic of Nizami, and *Path of Thunder*, after the novel by Abrahams; a number of symphonic works and film scores; and *Nocturnes*, to the words of the American Negro poet Langston Hughes, for voice and jazz band. The authentic modes of indigenous music, its capricious rhythms, its peculiar timbres, are combined in Karaev's compositions with the dynamism of contemporary musical language, with the broad expanses of intensive symphonic development. Kara Karaev is well acquainted with European symphonic literature and with the musical traditions of other nations. To cite an example, in his ballet *Path of Thunder*, Karaev makes skillful use of the folk music of African Negroes, as well as of modern resources. As director of the conservatory in Baku, Karaev is in charge of the education of a new generation of composers in Azerbaidzhan.

Sviridov, Taktakishvili, Karaev — these are only three names from the galaxy of Soviet composers of the middle generation. They are all genuinely modern; they have a deep feeling for the intensely dynamic tempo of twentieth-century life. Their unifying trait is the method of socialist realism. Their music is addressed to the masses. Their varied subject matter is drawn from the life of the people, their moods and sentiments, their sorrows and joys. All of these composers strive to reflect stirring, progressive ideas of our contemporary life, to observe and to trace their development and their realization. At the same time, the musical personality of each of these three composers is profoundly individual. This distinction is determined by the national color of their music, the predilection for this or that musical form. In Sviridov's music, the dramatic element is almost invariably tinted with lyricism; with Taktakishvili, it assumes an epical tone; Kara Karaev often conceives his dramatic expression in the forms of the dance. Thus, the general tendency of contemporary music in the direction of terse and dynamic expression, greatly varied meters and rhythms, enhancement and sometimes transcendence of modality manifests itself individually, above all, in the utilization of the national musical riches. For instance, Kara Karaev makes fine use of the sharp rhythms of Azerbaidzhan dances, and Taktakishvili of the emotional intensity and distinctive harmonies of the Georgian national idiom.

After hearing the work of only these few representatives of the middle generation of Soviet

musicians, it is difficult to understand how anyone can speak of uniformity in Soviet music.

ANOTHER generation of composers has appeared on the Soviet scene in the past few years: our creative youth from the various republics. The Russians, Rodion Shchedrin and Vladlen Chistyakov; the Ukrainians, Georgy Maiboroda and Igor Shamo; the Georgian, Sulkhan Tsintsadze; the Armenians, Alexander Arutunian and Dzhon Ter-Tatevosian; the Estonians, Eino Tamberg and Jan Rjaets; the Uzbek, Mutal Burkhanov; the Uigur, Kuddus Kuzhamyarov; the Tuva, Chirgal Ool, and many others make up the constellation of young talents that strengthen our hopes for the future.

"The promise of youth. . . ." Glazunov composed his first symphony when he was sixteen, and Shostakovich achieved world fame with his rollicking First Symphony when he was nineteen. The important thing is to find oneself, to see clearly the creative path ahead.

At the session devoted to the music of our youth, Rodion Shchedrin presented his First Symphony. We had already heard his sprightly piano concerto with its galloping popular dance in the finale; his ballet *Little Hunchbacked Horse*, after the well-known fairy tale by Yershov, which had its first performance at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow; and also his chamber music.

The symphony revealed a new facet of Shchedrin's talent; from the very first bars the listener is overwhelmed. The symphony opens with a climax, but this opening is justified by the dramatic tension of the music. The images of the war continue to nourish our art. They were responsible for Shostakovich's Seventh and Eighth symphonies; Shchedrin's symphony is also circumscribed by the visions of war. Two worlds are revealed here: the evil world of aggression and invasion; and, opposed to it, the world of Russian lyrical song. Time and again, there are intrusions of battle episodes, and each time they are shattered and dispersed by the constant poetic lyricism of Russian song. The conflict is depicted with particular power in the second of the three movements. Here one can feel the influence of Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony with its cataclysms of horror and anguish. The finale of Shchedrin's symphony is the lyrical focus of the entire cycle; it is cast in the form of variations on an inspired folk tune of the Vologda region. One might call it a lyrical requiem. In the nine variations, the elements of Russian polyphony, with its characteristic supporting voices, are utilized in many ways. In the concluding part of Shchedrin's

symphony, the music literally melts away; it ends, as it were, on a series of dots.

The symphony evoked considerable discussion. The composer was perhaps justly criticized for his abuse of climaxes and his unconvincing finale. But no one could deny the vividness and drama of individual episodes, the stirring Rachmaninoff-like lyricism. Shchedrin has his entire career still before him. His symphony demonstrates his ability to write dramatic music, and this is of the utmost importance for a composer of a truly broad inspiration.

At the plenary session there were heard other, more debatable compositions. Among them was the oratorio *Nagasaki*, a graduation work by the Moscow Conservatory student Shchnitke (class of 1958). The score abounds in challenging and topically strong images. The atomic explosion, pictured with tremendous effect, was, in the opinions of many, needlessly naturalistic. The novel tone colors, produced by electronic instruments, are impressive. Unforgettable is the fourth movement, *Among the Ashes*, the monologue of a mother seeking her son among the ruins. The tragic solo of the heartbroken woman is overwhelming in its emotional impact. The chorus responds with a passionate appeal to all mankind, warning the world against the possibility of such disasters in the future.

The war, with its ominous dark specter hovering over the world, determines the imagery of the second symphony by the young Armenian composer Ter-Tatevosian. Its subject matter is suggested by the epigraph: "Upon reading Sholokhov's story 'The Fate of a Man.'" Ter-Tatevosian's work aroused considerable friendly criticism. However, those who took the floor at the plenary session pointed out that many of the episodes in the symphony showed undeniable talent, and stressed the dramatic force of climaxes, the moving lyricism of the solo passages in the woodwind instruments, imparting the feeling of joy in man's aspirations and the depths of human sorrow. An ardent temperament and an emotional directness of utterance are the most poignant qualities of Ter-Tatevosian's music. These qualities were already apparent in his First Symphony, which brought him wide renown in the Soviet Union.

The Armenian school of composition is one of the strongest, most talented, and most productive. Apart from Ter-Tatevosian, I should mention Edgar Ovanesian, who has written a remarkable piano quintet and a symphony, Alexander Arutunian, Eduard Mirzoyan, and Arno Babajanian. The latter is already known in America through recordings of his piano trio and *Heroic Ballad* for piano and orchestra. He has recently completed a polyphonic sonata for violin and piano. The

young generation of Armenian composers have all passed through a Khatchaturian phase, having experienced to a greater or lesser extent the influence of Aram Khatchaturian, but now each of them has found his own creative path. True, they all possess common characteristics: the vivid dance quality, the utilization of folk songs with their inimitable capricious rhythms. But there is little resemblance between the classically restrained manner of Arutunian and the psychological expressionism of Ter-Tatevosian and the emotionalism of Arno Babajanian.

ANOTHER strong group of young talents is developing in Estonia. Its most mature exponent is the twenty-nine-year-old composer Eino Tamberg. His creative works include a cantata on a historical subject, a *Concerto Grosso* and *Symphonic Dances* (both of which have become widely known), as well as a number of miniatures of chamber music. Tamberg has an instinctive understanding of his native musical element and of the folk genres, and he knows how to utilize them in a novel way. How fresh is the sound of his *Symphonic Dances*! How many subtle harmonic inventions they reveal! The *Concerto Grosso* is a serious work of a highly professional standard, which has entered the repertory of many symphonic ensembles.

A different personality is presented by the twenty-six-year-old Estonian Jan Rjaets. This youthful composer is fascinated by the romantic quality of the achievements of Soviet science in outer space; his music pulsates with a dynamic beat of modern life. In his Third Symphony there are tone pictures of huge factory shops, the gay music, the cascade of rhythms generated by modern technical accomplishments. In the slow movements of the symphony we seem to be looking into the silent laboratories where the searching mind of man is busy at its great job.

Rjaets has entitled his score *A Cosmic Symphony*. Heated debates took place during the discussion of this work at the plenary session. Some opponents criticized the rationalistic tendency of the music, its strivings after naturalistic effects. These elements are easily explained by the composer's youth, and he will undoubtedly find a way out of his difficulties in the near future. However, the subject matter selected by Rjaets is of genuine interest. It is not by accident that many young composers are attracted by cosmic lore. For instance, the Russian composer Alexander Flyarkovsky has written a symphonic poem, *Sputnik*. Indeed, what can be more alluring and more romantic in its appeal for a young modern composer

than this satellite made by Soviet men, blazing new trails through the skies?

New composers have appeared in nearly all of our republics. It would be a serious omission, for instance, not to mention a remarkable young man, Andrei Eshpai, who represents a very small nationality, the Mari. His violin concerto, his symphony, his excellent songs can stand comparison with productions by many well-known Soviet musicians. At one of our plenary sessions there was heard a symphonic composition by the first composer of Tuva, Chirgal Ool.

In our land, all doors are open for new talents. Gifted young composers have every opportunity to develop and to enrich their creative individuality. All that is asked of them is that they serve our humanistic aims, that they help the people to experience more fully the joy of life, that they inspire the people in their labors and their struggle for an even brighter future.

These ethical requirements of true art ought to be instilled in the young generation during school years. We consider this educational process no less important than the development of technical mastery. It is only when these qualities — ethical and technical — are combined that the composer begins to understand clearly the responsibility he is assuming in his noble calling: the mission of awakening the best in man, of aesthetically enriching his soul. Each artist, each composer performs this mission according to his own insight, just as he has his own vision of the world, expressing this vision in his work. True variety of artistic creativity depends on this.

It seems to me that it is far more difficult to distinguish between two dodecaphonic composers, as we had an opportunity to observe in the music of some young students of Harvard University. And yet there is a great deal of variety in the works of their teachers, Walter Piston and Randall Thompson. I am willing to raise both hands in an affirmative vote for the fine stylistic variety among American composers, such as Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, Roger Sessions, Howard Hanson, William Schuman, Samuel Barber, Paul Creston, Gian-Carlo Menotti, and many other talented representatives of American music. But I vote against the gloomy and stereotyped expressionism of some youthful followers of the contemporary musical avant-garde in America. Their sprinklings of sound, with all their apparent novelty, are distressingly monotonous.

That is why, my dear Ulysses Kay, while I am ready to admit some shortcomings in our Soviet music, I can hardly agree with you that it suffers from uniformity. The facts, as I see them, decisively refute what you say.

Translated by Nicolas Slonimsky.





# TALENT AND THE BALLET

BY

YURI  
SLONIMSKY

*Yuri Slonimsky, the foremost critic of the dance, here describes the search for young ballerinas which has been conducted throughout the sixteen Soviet republics, and the education and training of the new talent in the schools, whose scope has been noticeably enlarged since the end of World War II.*

**T**alent endowed with talent is not in itself sufficient. For talent must always be provided with the proper guidance. This is an elementary truth, yet it is difficult to put into practice! And what is the result by proper guidance? In the art of dancing we are faced with two diametrically different views on the intrinsic nature of ballet.

Some consider the ballet as primarily a manifestation of physical training, a display of virtuosity in gymnastic technique. Others view ballet as a branch of human culture. To them the ballet is primarily concerned with the problems and destiny of mankind and with the most pressing and perplexing questions of existence.

These two opposing concepts today condition the whole education of the dancer. In the first, the stress is laid upon athletic training, and in the second, upon the ability to personify the human spirit and soul — in other words, to express in a warm and enthusiastic manner, through the means of dancing, the feelings of love and hate, of happiness and grief, the ideals of man and of mankind.

The classic ballets were unanimous in their definition of the nature of the ballet. Art must

exceed even the most perfect craftsmanship, because it pursues high and noble ends. The classics appealed to dancers, asking them, in the words of Saltykov-Shchedrin, to become "heralds of truth, beauty, and goodness." Inspired dancing is always a song of the soul, and Pushkin's expression, "the soaring of the soul," became the keynote of the Russian school of dancing. I prefer to speak of a single and unique Russian school instead of trying to differentiate between the Moscow and Saint Petersburg schools. No longer is there any fundamental difference, although there may be a difference in the pedagogical approach, depending on the teacher.

The classical traditions of the Russian school became revitalized with the artistic creations of the Soviet artists.

Consider Galina Ulanova and Vakhtang Chabukiani. When one recalls Ulanova on the stage, it is not her *pas* — though they are technically perfect — but the beauty and the greatness of the heroines she personifies that come first to the mind. When evoking images created by Ulanova, one conjures up human conscience and honor. When taking leave of her after the performance, one

*Photograph courtesy National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, Inc.*

thanks her for the lesson of life she gave through her dancing. The highest achievement of the art of ballet is precisely this blending of ethics and aesthetics.

Chabukyani, by his temperament, by the nature of his talent, by his appearance, is the antithesis of Ulanova. While she is a painter of lyrical pastel portraits, he is a sculptor of heroic scenes, like Michelangelo or Rodin. Nevertheless, the two dancers have something very important in common: the dancing of Ulanova, like that of Chabukyani, is a depiction of human dignity and happiness, the very essence of life itself. Their art is by no means the victory of those who seek to disparage the classic dance as being unable to express human feelings in a natural way. The classic ballet was unrivaled in its capacity to establish a close communion with audiences in all parts of the world and became the basis for the expressiveness of the ballet performer.

The miming in ballet is, first of all, dancing. It combines, at the same time, story, drama, psychology, and character. A Russian critic wrote about Taglioni and Ellsler: "Being clever dancers, they understood that dance is mime. And therein lies their merit." Today this is almost law for our ballet.

To produce and to develop talent are actually to teach one how to create images of type and character.

ULANOVA has written of her own experience in her book *The Making of a Ballerina*. She reminds us of the words of Maxim Gorky, "Talent is work," and she calls upon the artists of the ballet to devote their thinking and strivings to creative work. The artist must be in continuous search for improvement and perfection.

The daily exercises of the classical dances have many purposes, the first of which might be formulated like this: The height of art is to conceal artifice. Creative dancers, in the words of Stanislavsky, "do not dance, do not perform, but act, and can not do it otherwise than through plastic means." Of course, it is not given to everybody to embody this ideal as perfectly as a Pavlova, a Spesivtseva, or an Ulanova, but the Russian school of dance holds up this objective as the most important and most decisive. To attain it, it is necessary to insist upon uninterrupted movement in dancing. When the dance acquires the character of a cantilena, it can be likened to human speech or to song; jerky, abrupt movements, jerky tones, no matter how strong and how much virtuosity they have, will never lead either to vocal melody or fluidity of motion.

Dancing should not be confined to the feet and

to the hands alone; it should apply to the whole body. The harmony of movements of all parts of the body is essential to the dance. Finally, it is not only in the classic dance that one can achieve eloquence. Sooner or later the performer will have to learn character dances, ethnic dances, eccentric and rhythmic dancing, social dances, and pantomime.

It is absolutely necessary to love music, to know its capricious laws, to feel the throbs of its heart, to obey its imperious rhythm, which governs the entire behavior of the dancer on the stage. "Obeying the enchanted bow" was, according to Pushkin, the secret of the captivating charm of the ballerina Istomina. Obedient — not as a servant or a slave or a pupil, but as a true friend and a real mistress. No matter how many good dances might be demonstrated without music, they will be but artificial and witty curios: dance and music are inseparable forever.

Nor will intuition, however vivid and ardent, be sufficient to create complex imagery; only in combination with developed intellect — developed as far as comprehension and imagination are concerned — can it ensure success to a dancer.

To enrich the mind, to arouse the still unawakened feelings, to learn to control and express them eloquently in dancing — these are the aims of the ballet performer's education. The dancer learns not only from his teachers, his books, and performances; much learning comes from his relationships with other people. In our time, an artist cannot ignore what is going on in literature, poetry, painting, and sculpture. It would be an understatement to say that these arts are needed for spiritual nurture only; they are the sources from which proceed the formation of creative consciousness.

It is well known that only the truly contemporaneous is eternal. The ballet dancer can attain the highest degree of art only when his eyes are open wide to the surrounding world, when his heart beats in unison with the hearts of millions of his contemporaries and compatriots, when he is deeply affected by the vital concerns of his time. Only then can he identify himself with his hero, commune with him, making him a close and familiar contemporary.

True, there are many who believe that all this does not apply to the ballet. But remember the great ballets we inherited from the remote past: *Vain Precautions*, *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. When you think about them you realize that they are brought to life because of the acute feelings of the dancers, their eagerness to understand the age in which the ballets were composed and to respond to the thoughts and emotions of that age. Clearly, the realities of life are not

reflected directly and literally in the ballet art, but one cannot exist without the other.

"To be endowed with talent is not enough. Talent can flourish only if it is nurtured under favorable conditions." These words of the famous ballet master Didelot come to our mind each time we acclaim young Soviet dancers and ballerinas. We cannot help comparing the circumstances under which they were brought up with those prevalent in czarist Russia.

IT is hard to believe that in such a vast country as Russia under the czars there were only two state ballet schools, to which no more than twenty children were admitted each year. Children living outside Moscow and Saint Petersburg were not admitted at all, and children of certain faiths and certain racial minorities were also barred, even though they were nationals of Russia. Unless one had a favorable recommendation from some notable person, from some high official or some eminent artist, it was practically impossible to be accepted in an imperial school.

Although in some towns there were private dancing studios, they were very expensive. Children and adults attended the same classes, which were often of low artistic standing. The students had no hope of earning a name or a living in ballet, the imperial theaters being inaccessible, and there was nothing left for a ballet dancer in Russia but to lead a nomadic life traveling all over the country, working with small opera groups, on a daily fee basis, a discouraging prospect for a gifted dancer.

Today our ballet organizations comprise thirty theaters and sixteen state schools. Everywhere — in Siberia and Caucasia, in Middle Asia and Byelorussia, in the autonomous district of Karelia and in remote Buryat-Mongolia — children become familiar with the fundamentals of ballet, which were once accessible only to the few in the imperial schools in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

Now more than five thousand ballet artists are on the staffs of state theaters and about two thousand children and adolescents study in choreographic schools.

It was customary for dancing schools to accept only very young children. This cruel practice of the past could result in the loss of the finest talents. Now it is no longer the rule. Thus Vakhtang Chabukyani, Azef Meserer, Igor Moiseyev, Konstantin Sergeev, Mikhail Gabovich, and Sergei Koregne entered the ballet classes when they were in their teens, and after three or four years they held leading positions in Leningrad and Moscow theaters.

But it is not enough to give adolescents access to schools. They need special classes where they can catch up with those who started before them and where they can be taught individually, according to their particular gifts. Such training can be given only in a state school, which does not operate on a profit basis and which gives free education to everyone.

The ballet schools usually admit children at the age of nine, when they have had three years of elementary schooling. After a year the children start appearing on the stage and are gradually given more and more responsible parts. Thus, long before the pupils are through school, talents might be revealed, tested on the stage, and the future career of the beginner predicted.

Every few years the best students of ballet schools from all over the country come to Moscow to display their achievements. Once the performances are over the work of each school is discussed, and many critical observations and requests can be heard — all of which, of course, is most helpful.

Special care is given to ballet theaters and schools of the national republics. They are of recent creation; twenty to twenty-five years ago, the word "ballet" was unknown in most of these republics.

In the beginning, teachers from the oldest Russian schools went to the republics and selected the most gifted children and adolescents, who were brought to Moscow and Leningrad, and there, for eight years, were given the best training. Board and education were provided by the government. In this way the ballet companies of Kazakhstan and Kirgiz, of the Tatar Republic and Bashkir Republic, of Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan came into existence. So a tradition was established.

The working conditions of the young artists underwent a fundamental change. In the imperial theaters the beginner progressed slowly, climbing step by step; it was a long way from the *corps de ballet* to the ballerina. Now it is all different.

When the Bolshoi Ballet was on tour in America, spectators rated very highly the talent of young Kathy Maximova, who played the role of Katharine in the ballet *The Stone Flower*. Her experience on stage was a matter of months, not of years. But a talent such as hers had been awaited several years at the Bolshoi Theater. Maximova's teacher, Elizabeth Gerdt, was aware of Kathy's gifts and gradually developed them. Maximova promises to be a great ballerina. Her outstanding quality is something which is very dear to our art — the ability to assert in the beauty of dance, as in the beauty of the human soul, human thoughts and feelings.

On December 14, 1959, the inhabitants of Leningrad literally besieged the Kirov Theater



trying to attend the performance of the well-known ballet *Giselle*, though the performers were only beginners. The part of Albert was danced by the Bashkir, Rudolf Nureev. During his first year on the stage he managed to dance in two ballets, performed many solos, and went to the International Youth Festival in Vienna, where he was presented with a gold medal award. And on December 27 the same ballet was seen by inhabitants of Leningrad, performed by Natasha Makarova and Nikita Dolgushin — both out of school in the spring of 1959.

Nureev has an extraordinary natural talent. The height, the length, and the timing of his jumps are phenomenal. The vigorous whirling movements are thrilling. Nureev's nervous, somewhat exalted artistic constitution lends to everything he does an unprecedented, original character. His Albert is unlike anyone's we have ever seen. Having made *Giselle* fall in love with him as a whim, he then loses control over himself. The second act, in his version, unfolds like the effects of the torments of love, and we witness the gradual purification of the hero's feeling and the elevation of his soul. The main theme of the ballet comes clear to us in Nureev's meaningful dancing. In a word, new people are interpreting even the deepest past in a new way. They are viewing this past in the light of modern techniques.

Sometime in the spring, every theater, every town, every republic proceeds with a survey of young artists who acted in leading roles or performed solos during the season. The most gifted are entitled to appear in Moscow. Their success is rewarded with a prize, and they are assigned to different theaters.

In 1960, seven million young citizens of our country are on their way to being acquainted professionally with music, dancing, singing, dramatics, and the fine arts. It is impossible to estimate the number of children who take up dancing.

In big towns and in small towns, in workers' settlements and in larger villages, everywhere there are dance studios, courses, schools, and circles of artistic activities, which are supported mainly by professional unions and which are vast reservoirs of talent.

The successful results of these amateur artistic circles will be best illustrated by the following example. In the oldest Palace of Culture of the Leningrad professional unions (and there are six of these for adults and children and eight for children only), more than a hundred and fifty adults,

and as many children, take dancing lessons. During the quarter century of its existence, thirty-five soloists and dancers of the *corps de ballet* came from this school and entered professional ballet careers. More than fifty children and adolescents were



transferred to the oldest ballet school in the country. The children's choreographic circle gives four full ballet performances yearly, and the adult amateur circle two performances on the palace stage. They attract an enormous audience. All those activities take place in the time that performers can spare from their jobs or from school.

Some people might say, "No wonder such artistic activities go on in Leningrad!" But it so happens that in the club of the Dnepropetrovsk mill, with a capacity of eight hundred spectators, ballets such as *The Fountain of Bakhchisary* and *Swan Lake* are given regularly, and they are performed by the workers themselves. In Voronezh, even before the war, workers and employees from different enterprises danced *Vain Precautions*. A long time before the opera and ballet house was opened, young people who worked in plants and mills in Novosibirsk gave popular choreographic performances. The listing of national and amateur theaters where performances are given by amateurs in their spare time would take too much space.

In every ballet company we find soloists who came from amateur choreographic circles. And again we recall Didelot's words: "Talent can flourish only if it is nurtured under favorable conditions." Such conditions exist in our country, and they are improving from year to year.

Translated by Martin Kamin.



# THE BATTLE OF THE TRACTORS

A Comedy by SERGEI ANTONOV

*SERGEI ANTONOV, who was born in Leningrad in 1915, is well known for his deft and amusing satire. He was trained as a road-building engineer and is at home with tractors and bulldozers. He served at the front throughout the war and did not publish his first volume of stories until 1947. The narrative which follows is taken from his popular and mischievous novel of a cooperative farm, IT HAPPENED IN PENKOVO.*

THE flax was spread on the other side of the Kazanka River later than planned, but the weather held, and in the autumn dew the flax grew softer and softer with every day.

Comrade Ignatyev, the young secretary of the district Party committee, came three times to the village of Penkovo. On the first occasion he urged them to hurry with flax-seed deliveries; on the second he gave them a talk on the forthcoming regional meeting of dairymaids; and on the third it was a mystery to everyone why he came at all. He did not look for Ivan Savich, the chairman of the collective farm; he passed no criticism on anything. He chatted with Tonya about literature in general, gave her a writing pad for a present, and went on his way. Tonya was a comely young agronomist who had been transferred from Leningrad to Penkovo only two weeks before. Her tan had deepened, her cheeks wore a dark flush, and her smart blue overcoat was a familiar sight now in the fields or on the farm.

Matvei Morozov was a lanky young fellow of twenty-five or so. His movements were awkward, his eyes sad, and his hair worn in a fringe brushed

forward on his forehead. He had recently resigned from the kolkhoz and joined the M.T.S., the district headquarters. At the moment he was one of the tractor drivers on Zefirov's team. Ivan Savich, who distrusted Matvei, had already caught his daughter Larissa out in the fields where this team was working. This made him furious, and he swore he'd get at Matvei, he'd lock him behind bars.

So far, however, there was nothing he could get at Matvei for. The man had been longing to get back into a tractor, and now he worked with verve. Every day left less doubt that Zefirov's team would fulfill the plowing quota plan ahead of time. At a morning meeting of the tractor drivers, the director of the M.T.S. made special mention of Zefirov and promised him an extra bonus besides the one due for overfulfillment of quota.

The day of this meeting was a momentous one altogether. To begin with, a radio correspondent arrived to make a recording of a talk with the best workmen. Khromov, an elderly tractor driver, was summoned. The correspondent told Khromov to relax when answering his questions and to

*Drawing by Pustovii.*

laugh, while he directed a sort of tube at him. Khromov combed his hair, drank a glass of water, and staring at the tube as if it were a rattlesnake, tried to laugh. The correspondent called a halt with an angry shake of his head, wrote the answers for Khromov on a piece of paper, marking the words that were likely to stump the man, and then everything began all over again, to the delight of the spectators. The procedure was repeated again and again until poor Khromov was utterly worn out. Toward the end, he read "Communism" for "mechanism" and "mechanism" for "Communism" and his laughter gave out altogether. Matvei offered to do the laughing for him. The correspondent, provoked and angry, thrust his tube out of the window, recorded the drone of welding, and departed. As for Khromov, he turned guiltily away from his fellows, slunk home, and got terribly drunk that night.

It was also payday that day. Zefirov counted the notes he got, paid his trade union dues to the young girl posted by the cashier's window, and made for the tearoom with Matvei. They had a glass of vodka each. Then they tucked their trousers into their socks, got on their bicycles, and rode out to their field team.

It was a beautiful evening. The sky was aflame with the sunset glow, flooding the ground with an orange light. The two men, their faces the color of red Indians, rode along the forest edge. The shadows they threw stretched across the path to the very trees.

The rusty trunks of pines with their peeling, onionskin bark looked blazing hot. Yellow birches and aspens, standing among the dark, austere spruces, had spread fluffy little rugs of fallen leaves. A leaf fluttered now and then in the shadowed depths of the wood; humbly and softly, as though floating through water, it fluttered lower and lower, suddenly stopping in mid-flight, caught in an invisible spider web.

The air itself turned dusty-rose, and in that transparent, delicate haze the rooks were clearly etched as they flew slowly and wearily, weighed down with their gilded wings, as it were, over the harrowed field green with weeds.

Matvei and Zefirov, it must be said, took not the slightest notice of all this beauty around them. The farther they left the village behind them, the more persistent grew their regretful thought: Why, when they had money to spare and were actually in the tearoom, did they have one glass of vodka each and not two? The thought first struck Zefirov when they had reached the wood, and by the time they got to the fields it was mysteriously communicated to Matvei as well. It was clear to both that something had to be done to correct the mistake. But the M.T.S. was far away,

and the Penkovo cooperative store was already closed for the day. They put their heads together, and Zefirov dispatched young Vitka to Penkovo with strict orders to find the woman in charge of the store and ask her in Zefirov's name to unlock the store and get him what he wanted — this favor to go down on their "mutual aid" account.

VITKA peddled away on Zefirov's bicycle, and the two men began to fuel their tractors and talk of other things to make their waiting shorter.

"They certainly did speak well of you today," said Matvei.

"They did, but when it comes to a radio broadcast, it's always Khromov and no one else, see?" Zefirov said, unscrewing a drum stopper. "It's always the way here: they make a running start singing someone's praises, and they never put the brakes on. And what's Khromov, I ask you? He's got a screw loose here." Zefirov tapped his forehead. "But they let him do the broadcast again. Why? Did he strike a bargain or something, that he'd get this privilege handed out to him just as regularly as his pay and overalls?"

"Show business," said Matvei. "They've got their orders to make a fuss over the best men. When it's the first team, it's Khromov; when it's our team, it's you."

"Don't you compare me to Khromov!"

"You're as high and mighty as Khromov. One can see it a mile off."

"Just what can one see?"

"Take a look at your tractor. It's filthy. There's moss growing on the tubes."

"I've done two quotas on it without servicing."

"Why drive it so hard? Can't you see it's leaking oil? Have a heart. After all, the motor is a dumb beast. You might at least wipe the cylinder block once in a while."

"Don't I? Who does it for me — do you?"

"I don't, but neither do you. You've handed the job down to Vitka — a fourteen-year-old boy! Do you think I can't see? You don't care enough for your tractor."

"Stop nagging! With my own money I've bought a brush to clean the plugs." Zefirov pulled out a toothbrush from his pocket and showed it to Matvei. "See?"

They said no more, because there was Vitka coming back. The cooperative store had run out of vodka, and instead, Vitka had been given a bottle of port with sealing wax around the cork. Zefirov cursed local trade in general, the woman in charge of the store, and Vitka, for good measure. He then found a glass settler which he kept



with his fuel hoses and spanners, uncorked the bottle, and poured out some wine. All three of them took a swig of it.

"Whatever you say, with the care you take of your tractor, it'll never pull thirty-six horsepower," said Matvei, spitting bits of sealing wax from his mouth.

"It will pull as much as it's supposed to pull."

"That's right, only as much as it's supposed to pull."

"Cut it out now," Zefirov said.

"Oh, no, I won't. Let's ask Vitka. I say, Vitka, whose machine is the more powerful?"

Vitka darted a wary glance at Zefirov and said, "I don't know."

"Yes, you do. You're just scared of your boss," Matvei said. "I'll take any bet that my machine is."

"So what, even if it is?" said Zefirov.

"It's easy enough for you to say 'So what?' since you're getting the bonuses anyway. But I'm pretty certain you won't take up my bet."

"Why not? Here goes."

Zefirov staked his promised bonus, and Matvei staked his jacket.

"The mechanic is coming tomorrow; then we'll see," Zefirov said.

"What do we want a mechanic for? We'll settle it between us. Vitka, go fetch the coupler."

Vitka stared wide-eyed at Zefirov, who turned a puzzled look on Matvei.

"This is how we'll do it," Matvei said. "We'll link the tractors together and have a tug of war. The one who pulls the other over wins. Clear?"

"Have you gone crazy or what?"

"You're scared that your tractor will fall to pieces, aren't you?"

"I'm not scared. It's not allowed, that's all."

"Suit yourself. I can trust my machine." Matvei slapped the cowl of his tractor fondly.

"I can trust mine too. But it's not allowed. It's a crazy idea, anyway. Wasting fuel, the wear and tear —"

"Why the sudden anxiety for the wear and tear? It's not the wear and tear that's frightening you; it's being sacked by the front-rankers."

"Who, me? Sacked?" Zefirov growled. "Hey, Vitka, link them."

Matvei and Zefirov backed their tractors close together, put the coupler in the links, and tightened the coupling bolts. It was agreed to switch on the clutches simultaneously at a given signal.

His heart hammering with excitement, Vitka settled down on an overturned pail some distance away. He was the judge and the sole spectator.

Matvei and Zefirov climbed into the cabs. The motors roared. Vitka doffed his cap and prepared to give the signal.

Suddenly Tonya appeared, and this made the whole thing different. Zefirov was the first to see her. He choked his motor and jumped down to the ground.

"What's wrong?" Matvei called, leaning out of the window.

Zefirov indicated Tonya's approaching figure with a nod and said, "Look."

Tonya, in her smart, citified blue overcoat, came close to the tractors and asked, "What are you doing?"

"It's him," Zefirov mumbled.

"We're straightening the coupling bolt," Matvei cut in.

"Oh, I see," Tonya said vaguely.

"Get in, Zefirov!" Matvei shouted, and then warned Tonya, "You'd better go away. If the coupler breaks loose, you'll never collect the pieces."

Tonya joined Vitka. Zefirov climbed into the cab. The motors roared again. Vitka waved his cap, and the tracks came into motion. Matvei and Zefirov sat gripping their steering gears, their faces so tense it seemed that all this thundering power was emanating from them and not the motors at all. The tractors roared and tumbled without moving. The tracks soon stripped the grassy topsoil, and now their ribbed paws were rhythmically scraping the ground. Two hills of dark-brown earth were growing fast between the two machines, which sank deeper and deeper into the newly dug trenches. The motors roared.

"I'm sure it must be straightened now," Tonya said uneasily.

At that precise moment something snapped with a deafening report. The tractors tore loose and darted forward. A queer, large object hurtled down from the sky, wailing like a bomb, and dropped in the field behind the plows. Silence fell, deafening in its suddenness.

"I told you it wasn't allowed," Zefirov's voice came to Tonya as though muffled in cotton wool.

Matvei jumped down to the ground and inspected the damage. The coupling link was wrenched off his tractor, and it was that which had shot up into the sky and plopped down behind the plows.

THE director of the district called a meeting the following day to discuss the matter.

Matvei was in the outer office, waiting to be summoned. The door into the director's room was shut, and no one was allowed to go in. Ignatyev, Tonya, and Zefirov were closeted in there, talking over the incident.

Matvei sat on the slippery oilcloth sofa and, for lack of anything better to do, watched the

mysterious life of the office. Two middle-aged women were competing in abacus-clicking behind a low wooden railing. A typewriter by the window tinkled its melodious little bell from time to time. In front of another window, a young girl was twirling the handle of a calculating machine. Everyone else was busy writing, scratching away, all except a little old man in felt boots who stood on a chair in front of a cabinet, hunting through the files. He pulled out one thick file after another, hauled them to his desk, and patiently leafed through them. They were filled with papers of different sizes and colors: some were only a few inches square, others were huge, folded in accordion pleats, so when the old man unfolded them, the sheets covered the whole of his desk — inkstand, ruler, puncher, and all.

Matvei had been watching him for almost an hour now, but the paper he was searching for was not yet found. Ivan Savich, looking bright and cheerful, walked past Matvei and disappeared into the director's room. Matvei guessed that the chairman had been invited to discuss the case.

About ten minutes later, Tonya appeared from the director's room. She walked through the general office, tugged hard at the heavy front door to pull it open, and went out. After a moment's thought, Matvei followed her out. Tonya stood by the roadside, waiting for a passing car to give her a lift.

"Will they be much longer?" Matvei asked.

"Go in and wait. They'll call you," Tonya told him.

"Was it you who told on us?"

"Yes." Tonya looked straight into his eyes. "And I'm not a bit sorry." Her voice dropped. "Because of you, I'm to get a warning too."

"You don't say!"

"I do believe that what you people need here is a militiaman with a club and not an agronomist at all. Now, why are you like that?"

"I'm bored, that's why," Matvei said.

"What do you mean, you're bored? You get everything your own way. You wanted to join the M.T.S.; they let you. You wanted to be on Zefirov's team; they put you on it." Then she threw a wary glance over her shoulder and added, "Watch your step, they want to take this matter to court."

"And what about Zefirov?"

"Zefirov stood up for you for all he was worth. He told them he was the team leader and therefore the only one responsible for the whole thing. He tried very hard to clear you."

"That doesn't matter. Will he be getting anything?"

"No, I don't think he will. After all, they do think a lot of him."

Ivan Savich thrust his head out of the office and called in a pleasant voice, "Morozov, you're invited inside."

"At least do try to behave properly in there," Tonya said hurriedly. "Button your shirt collar. Here, let me."

Matvei walked past the little old man who was still searching for his paper and entered the director's room.

The director, a newly appointed man, gray-haired but young of face, with a badge of an honorable railwayman on his chest, studied Matvei curiously.

"Well, then, Morozov, what are we to do with you now?" the director asked.

"It's up to you. There are so many of you here, and I'm alone."

"What do you mean, alone?" asked Ivan Savich, his hairy hand stroking the cloth table-cover caressingly. "That's why we've invited you here, to work it all out together, so there'd be no mistake in our decision. We haven't begun talking to you yet, and you're all up in arms already. That's not the way. Stop yawning! Bored, are you? You're not bored when you're trying to wreck a tractor, but you are when you have to talk to us, is that it?"

"I am," Matvei said.

"Now what did I tell you?" Ivan Savich, red with indignation, turned to Ignatyev. "Any other man would have thought better of his behavior, admitted his fault, but this one — never!"

"What's your opinion — is Zefirov to blame?" the director asked.

"It was my idea. I alone am to blame," Matvei replied.

"Look, how noble of him!" cried Ivan Savich. "We've made sure without your noble-mindedness that you were the only one to blame, that it was all your fault and no one else's. Zefirov has been working here for two years, and he's had nothing but gratitude in all that time. And you, wherever you butt in, it's trouble, nothing but trouble. You're certainly a pest. Last year when you were working here, you had trouble too."

"Not last year," Matvei said.

"Slipped your mind, has it?"

"A warning's not like a good story, so why remember it?"

"You will when we show it to you on paper."

The director rang. The old man in the felt boots came in.

"Have you found it?"

"We're looking hard."

"Carry on, then."

The old man shuffled out.

"It's no good talking to him. Send all the papers into the prosecutor's office — let them investi-

gate." Ivan Savich slapped his palm down on the table. "Just state your case: deliberate mis-handling of a tractor. And I'll add my bit to it as well."

Everyone looked at Matvei. But Matvei only yawned.

"That's all, then," said the director. "If no one objects, we'll hand the matter over to the prosecutor. Morozov, any objections?"

"No," Matvei said.

"That means the district court," snarled Ivan Savich, driven frantic by Matvei's composure. "That means jail, you understand?"

"Shall I go?" Matvei asked the director.

"Aren't you going to say anything at all?" The director looked at Matvei with undisguised curiosity. "Don't you really care?"

"What's the difference? Working here or working in jail?"

"You might think of your poor mother, at least," Ivan Savich put in.

"Mother's working on the farm. She'll manage somehow," Matvei said. "I'm rather sorry for my wife, of course."

"What wife? Is he married?" the director asked.

"It's a lie!" Ivan Savich waved the matter away. "That's one of his usual jokes. Who'd marry a chap like him? I ask you. There's no fool who would."

"One has."

"Lies!" roared Ivan Savich.

"No, it's not. We signed the marriage papers this morning. I've got the certificate here." Matvei fumbled through his pockets. "It's hard on her, of course. Her man locked up on her wedding day. But never mind, she'll get over it. I don't suppose they'll give me a long term."

He found the certificate at last and handed it to the director.

"It's a marriage certificate all right. Well, congratulations. Who is she, a local girl?"

"Yes, one of our Penkovo girls."

"There you are, Ivan Savich, you said it was a lie. Who is this Larissa Ivanovna?"

"What Larissa Ivanovna?" Ivan Savich asked, dumfounded.

"A Penkovo girl — Larissa Ivanovna. Morozov's wife."

"Wife? How can she be his wife? Give it to me," and Ivan Savich jerked the marriage certificate from the director's hand. He studied it long and closely, and a nervous tic twitched his left eye.

"No," he suddenly gasped. "No. It cannot be! He's stolen a blank form at the village soviet! Look, look, you can't make out the stamp — it's all smeared."

The director and Ignatyev examined the certificate scrupulously.

"Well?" Ivan Savich was anxious. "I tell you, it's a fake. File it with the other evidence."

The door flew open and Larissa rushed into the room. "Comrade director, forgive him!" she cried, darting to Matvei's side. "It wasn't his fault at all."

"Go away, Larissa," Matvei said.

"I swear it wasn't," Larissa continued, taking no heed of Matvei's words. "The link's been welded already. Why prosecute him, then? What for?"

"Go away, do you hear?" Matvei repeated and gave her a shove toward the door.

"Take your hands off her!" Ivan Savich shouted and brought his fist down on the table. "Take your hands off my daughter!"

"If you put him in jail, I'll go with him," Larissa went on, undaunted. "If they won't let me, I'll smash something too, and then they'll have to lock us up together. And as for you, Dad, shut up! Your orders mean nothing where I'm concerned."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I obey his orders now. There!" and she kissed Matvei.

"You two had better go home," the director said. "This is no place for wedding celebrations."

Matvei and Larissa walked through the general office. The old man in felt boots was still standing on a chair, hunting through the files.

*Translated by Olga Sharlse.*

## TO MY CRITICS

By Alexander Tvardovsky

Teach me, would you, my critics, give me a facile  
Lesson: yes, according to you

I must be deaf, blind, shape my verses  
By what I may and what I may not do.

But forgive me if I foresee a future  
Hour, oh, not near, when you'll hector me,  
You yourselves, questioning, insisting:  
Poet, where were you? What was it you did see?

*Translated by Babelle Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky.*



NIKOLAI AKIMOV

# THE DIFFICULTY OF PRODUCING COMEDY



*In this paper NIKOLAI AKIMOV, director of the Leningrad Comedy Theater, explores the sensitive question of how far one may go in the writing of satire. He makes a plea for creative latitude for the comedy writer comparable to what the serious dramatist enjoys.*

**I**N OUR comedy theater there are tremendous possibilities for the propagation of Soviet ideas. In contrast to other kinds of plays, comedy possesses the quality of inevitability. A wise and well-written comedy, infecting the spectators with laughter, urges on the audience the point of view of the author, even if individual spectators at first do not agree with it. And this joyous medium could become a militant weapon for the assertion of our views even beyond our borders.

The path traversed by a Soviet comedy, from the writing table of the dramatist to the footlights, is sometimes very rocky, and in the process of production, the play goes through a gradual limiting of scope, a smoothing of the corners, a watering down of any kind of sharp generalization. In the beginning, for example, an author may be persuaded to make a minister a deputy minister, then the chief of a department, then the chief of a section, after which the criticism is made: "What are you talking about? This is trivial!"

If it were authoritatively explained to us that in the next fifty years comedy would not be necessary to us, I would be completely set at ease. One could occupy oneself with other matters. But if we are told that comedy is absolutely necessary, then our duty as professionals is to ask: Under what conditions can it occupy a worthy place in Soviet dramaturgy?

*Woodcut by Goncharov.*

Comedy is a mass medium, and it takes the total impact of hundreds of comedies to influence society. One comedy, like one roe put under the microscope and examined, in isolation will always seem atypical. The basic condition for the development of comedies is that there should be many. A few will be very good and will become classics; a significant number will be of average quality; and a considerable number will be bad. Concerning the harmful, ideologically vicious, pathological comedies, the door to them — as with everything vicious — must be tightly shut.

Points of view on any art form are in general true or untrue. And that there exist among us untrue points of view is not so terrible, if only they are detected in the course of time and corrected. Among us, for example, there still exists, inherited from the past, the division of different mediums into respectable and not respectable.

There are sublime mediums which can arouse admiration or respect. Serious drama is a respected medium. One can like or dislike comedy, but one does not have to respect it. Such an attitude extends also to personal representatives of the medium. Even a little-known artist of the Moscow Art Theater is more respected than, for example, the comic actor Raikin. People love Raikin, but since he is merely funny, why should they respect him? He is placed in the category of variety theater, and this is entirely unrespectable.

The first thing that is said now about any new comedy is, "It has a petty theme." Under the concept of petty themes, in recent times, certain people include a great deal: love, the building of a family, and any number of domestic and ethical questions. More than once I have heard a critic say, "So what? You showed a rascal careerist. Is that worth the attention of a Soviet audience?" Rascals must be exposed on the stage, though they themselves would very much like to be left in peace.

Misunderstanding of the laws of the medium is another important factor in the stifling of comedy. If a comedy situation or a comic hero is evaluated from the point of view of the laws of serious drama, you receive irrefutable proof of the stupidity of the authors of the comedy. Try to take Chaplin out of the atmosphere of his comic scenes and put him into *Anna Karenina*, or put Gogol's Yaichnitsa into *Notes from the House of the Dead*, or Skapen into *Phèdre*.

Some critics knock a comedy off its feet by simply retelling its content in abbreviated form. Such a blow could not be survived even by *Woe from Wit*: A young man came to Moscow; the girl he loved loved another; the man took offense and left. A stupid story about which there is nothing to tell, a "petty theme." But it seems that *Woe from Wit* is a great work of art.

Not long ago, in the newspaper *Literature and Life*, Fyodor Panferov precisely by this means retold *The Story of a Young Married Couple* by Eugene Shwartz, which did not in the least convince me that the education of our youth and the raising of a family are petty themes.

For a true judgment of comedy, one must always check one's suppositions with the reactions of the audience. The most experienced dramatist or director must guess and hope that a comedy is funny. But to know if it is really so can be done only through communication with the spectator. The sensation of physical illness we check with a thermometer. However, one must decide beforehand whether to believe the thermometer or not. And we often believe it only if its evidence suits us.

A strict critic may change his attitude toward the Soviet audience depending on whether its reaction coincides with his views. If the audience does not accept a comedy which the critic does not like, then he writes: "Our adult Soviet spectators evaluated on its merits the sorry attempts of the author to make them laugh with empty. . . ." But if, to the dissatisfaction of the critic, the audience likes the comedy, then all the spectators of the theater are immediately transformed into a "backward part of the Philistine public, whose laughter. . . ." Is it not time for us to understand

that the forty-year probation of Soviet artistic culture obliges us to make respectful evaluations and to draw sound conclusions from these evaluations?

It seems to me that our theaters take little advantage of such interesting means of communication with audiences as the spectators' conference. When the Leningrad Comedy Theater played *The Story of a Young Married Couple* by Shwartz, it had two spectator conferences. The judgment of the audience interested us very much. Both conferences were lively, and we received full support for the play from the spectators. The workers of the Kirov factory were especially outspoken. These were by no means abstract aesthetic discussions about the play, such as we are used to hearing from the critics; no, the theme of the play — the building of a young family — touched the spectators vitally, especially the women, who told of personal family matters and their own difficulties and doubts. One young woman worker of the factory spoke with excitement about how she had been unfair to her husband and now would approach this problem in a new way. To see the palpable influence of a show on a spectator who comes to practical conclusions about his own life because of it, who listens to the dramatist as he would to a good and wise counselor — this is a great and useful lesson for the theater and the dramatist.

FOR the creation of good comedy, many years of effort are needed. Theaters which have dedicated themselves to this medium have learned a great deal from their own and others' mistakes and from the reactions of millions of those who have seen the plays. As experience shows, one man alone can destroy a good comedy; one person can undermine the effect of the comedy if he is determined to do so. Such a free sharpshooter usually works at his own risk.

If someone succeeded in persuading us that a batch of canned goods sent to town was spoiled, and after its destruction it was explained that the rumor about the spoilage was the work of a sick imagination, then probably the person who spread the false information would be held responsible for the destruction. In our business, this is not so. If one "Status Seeker" succeeds in attaining the banning of a comedy as harmful and insidious, and later it is explained that it was useful and harmless, then no one answers for the damage.

A good example of this is the story of the comedy *The Cottage* by Valentin Kataev. In 1941, Kataev wrote a joyful and wise comedy about the inhabitants of the small Soviet town of Konsk, about their love for their city, about their struggle

for its prosperity. He told about them through the aid of a plot complicated by gay misunderstandings. The comedy was accepted and rehearsed in Moscow in the Vakhtangov Theater and in Leningrad in the Comedy Theater. Rehearsals were nearing the end; the building of the sets was finished. Many theaters outside these two cities also accepted the play.

One unlucky day the directors of all theaters working on *The Cottage* were called to the telephone. A composed but inflexible voice from Moscow, from the Committee on the Arts, suggested the immediate cessation of work on the play. No explanation was made, and we were given to understand that it was impossible to explain by telephone. But it was not explained afterward, even in personal talks.

It must be kept in mind that the acceptance of a play in any theater is preceded first by reading to the troupe and then by discussion between the management and the directors and Party and professional organizations. No play accepted for presentation can bypass this procedure, and *The Cottage* was read by several hundreds of workers of Soviet culture who were concerned about their theater. The play was approved by the Main Repertory Committee and by the Committee on the Arts. And among none of the hundreds of these responsible people did the comedy evoke any suspicion; no one saw in it any lampoon or any hidden barbs.

The invasion of the Soviet Union in June, 1941, naturally forced everyone quickly to forget about this petty event on the theatrical front. Sixteen years passed. The Moscow Theater of Satire presented *The Cottage* under a new title, *This Happened in Kansk*.

But comedy, except for the very top plays which become classics, is a fleeting medium, a rapidly spoiling commodity, and, of course, *The Cottage* sounds today not at all as it would have sounded sixteen years ago. Many domestic circumstances are rendered obsolete by the passage of time. But the acceptance now of the removed comedy does not make up for the damage which it suffered.

WHY is all this possible? How can we fight this unhealthy situation? There exists only one true, not simple means: to seek to get everyone — dramatists, theaters, critics, and even audiences — to agree on the aims of comedy and on certain basic conditions for the development of Soviet comic mediums:

1. If, in a play, everything is normal; if good, correct people are acting; if events do not depart from well-accepted norms and nothing throws

the heroes off balance, then there simply is no comedy. Yet most of the suggestions offered the dramatist are directed toward getting him to come closer to the norm and to move further away from the comedy medium.

2. We often confuse typical phenomena of life, worthy of being portrayed in comedy, with the construction of a comedy subject which must not and cannot be a reflection of the usual events of life. For heroes of a comedy to be able to manifest their typical characteristics, they must be set in unusual circumstances. Then you can get a comedy. The best tradition of Russian classics confirms this theory.

Yet how often you hear our comedy writers reproached: "This is just a special case; this is not at all a typical event." I think that our writers hear this every time they succeed in thinking up a good comedy subject.

In articles and reviews devoted to comedies, one often reads the biting criticism, "an invented subject," although no doubt the authors have thought of their subjects as an indispensable and very important element of comedy. A good comedy writer can find themes in his observations of life and in his images of people. But there is a tremendous difference between this part of his creative process and the construction of a comic subject, well-knit, clear, unexpected, which fuses into final form all the material that the writer has collected.

We don't need invented subjects; but talented, thought-over, inventively constructed ones are absolutely necessary for any good comedy.

3. At a certain point, the amusing in a comedy is transferred to the position of contraband. This is helped no little by stock critical epithets of an insulting character: "schematic," "he seeks to get a laugh," "for the sake of a laugh," "naked laugh," "belly laugh."

No one will dispute the facts that laughs are different and that a flat joke irritates no less than a stupid serious statement. However, if one were to compile statistics of our periodical press and theatrical reviews and compare how often laughter is described in scornful terms with how seldom the humor and wit of an author are praised, the ratio would probably turn out to be a hundred to one. If critics praise a comedy, it is for depth of thought or the pathos of the situation, almost never for humor.

But if you think about it, the desire of the comedy writer to get a laugh is no more harmful than the effort of a baker to feed, a doctor to heal, or a builder to build.

Listen to any conversation of the author of a comedy, whether in the theater, in the culture office, in the editorial office, or in a debate. Ideas



are discussed — characters, conceptions, roles, excisions, long passages, additions — but the talk never concerns laughter. It is somehow taken for granted that laughter is necessary to the dramatist alone. And a comedy writer often has to bring humor to the stage by stealth and shamefacedly, and only when he sees the reaction of the audience can he convince himself that there was nothing to be ashamed of in his play and that humor is also necessary to the spectator of a comedy.

4. Only high mastery of comedy can secure the manifestation of a friendly smile in the hall. Moreover, even in this realm there exist mistaken views. Different types of art depend on different techniques. Without knowing musical technique, the person gifted with native talent can compose a song for one voice, but it takes special education before one can write a symphony.

Of all literary mediums, perhaps comedy is the most complicated with respect to technique, and yet we pay no attention to this question. In a great number of the comedies by young authors which I have read recently, an interesting idea collapses because of technical unpreparedness, inability to build, to carry a work to completion. But where can we send a gifted and inquisitive beginning comedy writer who wants to gain the

necessary knowledge, to read the necessary books, to know the theory of comedy? What, besides classic examples, can he study?

We have not printed one work on this theme. Books about Soviet comedy have set themselves completely different tasks, and they are of little help to the young author who might want to understand the basic laws of construction of a comedy in our time. One must remember that each epoch, even each small bit of time, has its character, its mode of life, its types, its inimitable specifics. No theatrical medium is adapted to fix the character of an epoch so completely as comedy.

The Soviet people love, value, and subtly understand humor. Besides, they are inclined to examine each question optimistically. They want to see gay and wise comedies, profound ones for reflection and joyous ones for recreation; and those of us who work in the theater are obliged to respond to these demands.

I am sure that we shall find the personnel, that we have not stopped producing new talent. It is only necessary to create the atmosphere in which these talents competing with one another can flourish. There will be disruptions and failures, but we must be patient in order to achieve the greatest success, the creation of a new Soviet comedy.

## TWO by MARGARITA ALIGER

*A lyric poet who was born in 1915 and studied at the Literary Institute of the Soviet Writers' Union, Margarita Aliger was awarded a Stalin Prize for her long poem, ZOYA. She is one of the most audacious women now writing in the U.S.S.R.*

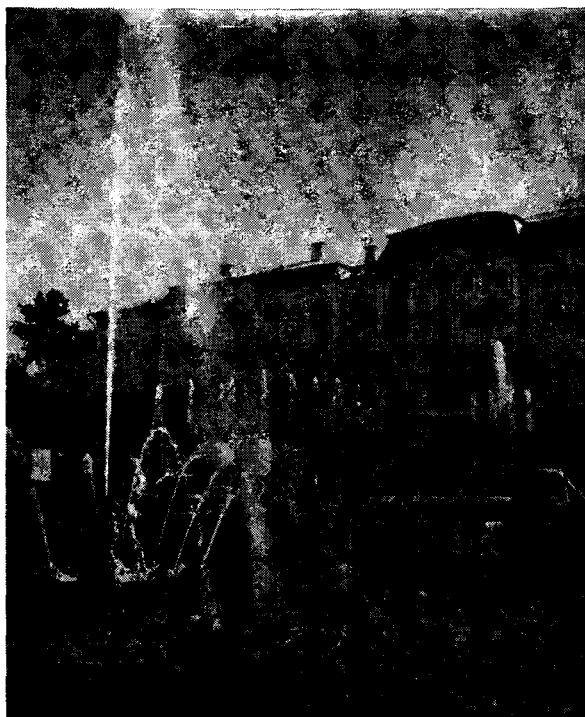
And so once more they quarrel in the trolley;  
Their anger, flaring, will not let them see  
That they stand stripped before a crowd of strangers.  
Helpless and hurt, I watch them enviously.

They do not know their happiness; there's no one  
To show it to them, tell them what is plain:  
Think! You are next each other, breathing, speaking,  
And it can still come right for you again.

*Translated by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky.*

## LEV PETROV

*LEV PETROV is the Director of the Institute for the Restoration of Historic Monuments in Moscow and the man most familiar with the artistic and dedicated work which has gone into the rebuilding of the cathedrals and historic shrines and the restoration or uncovering of the ancient icons.*



# THE ART OF RESTORATION

**I**MMEDIATELY after the October Revolution in 1917, the Soviet government took effective measures to protect cultural relics. Government commissars charged with the task of ensuring the safety of art and historical treasures were assigned to all museums and palaces of Petrograd. A special order was issued to safeguard and make an inventory of historical and art treasures concentrated in the Winter Palace, the residence of Russian czars.

The People's Commissariat of Education, as the Ministry of Education was called at that time, issued an appeal "To Workers, Peasants, Soldiers, Sailors, and All Citizens of Russia." The appeal said:

In addition to natural riches, toilers have inherited great cultural riches: buildings of inimitable beauty, museums full of rare and beautiful objects, both instructive and inspiring, libraries preserving vast spiritual treasures, and so forth.

All this is the property of the people. All this will help the poor man — and his children — quickly to go beyond the former ruling classes, will help him to become a new man, heir to the old culture and creator of an entirely new culture.

Comrades, we must vigilantly safeguard this property of the people.

The first years of the life of the Soviet state were marked by great hardships. Economic dis-

location caused by World War I, the civil war and foreign intervention, the blockade and famine — all this put an enormous strain on the country's resources. Yet even under such conditions, the government found time and funds to preserve the cultural heritage. On October 5, 1918, V. I. Lenin signed the Soviet government's first act of legislation in this sphere, the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars "On Registering, Taking Inventory, and Protecting Relics of Art and Antiquity, Owned by Private Individuals, Societies, and Institutions." In the years that followed, additional decrees elevated the protection of relics to a task of national importance.

On the basis of all this legislation, a system of administrative agencies and restoration studios was set up with the object of studying such relics, preparing work and cost estimates, carrying out the practical restoration, and publishing reports on the cultural monuments. Such studios, established in accordance with the territorial principle, are now operating in the capitals of the Union republics and in towns and regions where most of the monuments are concentrated — Novgorod, Pskov, Ryazan, Yaroslavl, Leningrad. The Central Research Restoration Studio is in Moscow under the U.S.S.R. Academy of Construction and Architecture. The staff members of these studios have been remarkably successful in their scientific methods of

restoration, and in the course of their research the experts have brought to light a multitude of hitherto unknown cultural treasures.

**R**ESTORATION studios have been at their busiest since the end of World War II. The fascist invaders inflicted grave and vicious damage upon the cultural treasures of the country. Having proclaimed the barbarous slogan that "cultural values in the East are of no importance," the Nazis systematically and deliberately set about demolishing our most precious architectural monuments, destroying museums and their entire art collections. Destruction was heaviest in the western regions — Novgorod, Pskov, Kiev, Smolensk, Chernigov — where most of the architectural monuments of ancient Russian culture were concentrated.

Some of these unique edifices were destroyed beyond repair; others escaped total destruction, but their further existence was in grave jeopardy. Owing to the assistance rendered by the Soviet government and the tremendous enthusiasm with which the Soviet people tackled the task of restoring normal conditions, Soviet restoration experts were able to raise many of these monuments from the ruins.

Already, by the end of 1944, work had begun on the restoration of St. Sofia Cathedral, built in 1045 in Novgorod, one of the most ancient Russian cities.

Enormous holes in the dome and vaults and heavy damage to walls from shells and bombs had disfigured the cathedral beyond recognition. Furthermore, the Nazis had carried away some components of the building. In November, 1948, the first stage of restoration was completed. The great snow-white mass of St. Sofia Cathedral, as if molded by the hand of a sculptor, again rose over the city, its gilt dome brightly shining in the sun.

Following the restoration of St. Sofia Cathedral, large-scale operations began on other Novgorod monuments, and at this writing practically all the ancient buildings have been restored. The most extensive work has been done in the restoration of the Novgorod kremlin, the ancient nucleus of the city. Its walls and towers were erected at the end of the fifteenth century, on the site of more ancient ones. But even these walls and towers were rebuilt and changed many times in the five centuries of their existence.

By our time they had lost many of their architectural details: the outline of merlons had changed; loopholes had been filled in; roofs over the rampart walk and the tall, tented roofs of the towers had disappeared. The flat nineteenth-

century roofs that replaced them divested the buildings of their former beauty.

The original ground plan of the kremlin had likewise changed. The water-filled moat which surrounded it on three sides (on the fourth side the kremlin is protected by the Volkhov River) had become silted and overgrown, and its banks were obliterated. The town which sprang up beyond the walls grew haphazardly, without any definite plan.

As a result of an on-the-spot investigation of the ancient monument and the study of numerous documents in the archives, it has been possible to restore the walls and towers as they were in the fifteenth century. The program includes the restoration of the historical plan of the Novgorod kremlin. The moat beyond the kremlin walls will be restored and filled with water, and five bridges will be built across it. The building line beyond the moat will be pushed back somewhat, and a public park girding the kremlin in a semicircle will be laid out in the open space thus formed between the kremlin and the city. The main city square, including an administrative center, will be built in front of the entrance to the kremlin.

Equally extensive restoration work is going on in other parts of the Soviet Union. More than 2000 kilometers southeast of Novgorod, on the banks of the Volga River, stands another ancient Russian city — Astrakhan. Like Novgorod, it had its beginnings in the construction of a kremlin, in the 1580s. Built as a stronghold at the frontier of the Russian state of those times, the Astrakhan kremlin was the residence of the local clerical authorities and served as the quarters of a military garrison. Barracks and various auxiliary services were built at random all over its territory. Sections of the fortress walls were torn down and replaced with box-type buildings of nondescript architecture. Some parts of the walls grew dilapidated and crumbled. As a result, the earth level rose considerably, and ancient buildings seem to have sunk into the ground. The town around the kremlin had few amenities in prerevolutionary times and consisted of buildings of the most inferior type.

Under the program drawn up a few years ago, the Astrakhan kremlin walls and towers are to be rebuilt all along their circumference, and their original architectural forms will be restored as far as possible. Buildings added later which have no architectural value, including those erected on the line of the walls, are to be pulled down and the walls rebuilt. Along with the restoration of ancient buildings, extensive work is being done to restore the original plan of the kremlin and to lower the ground plan to its original level. The reconstruction of the Astrakhan kremlin is coordinated with



the planning and building up of the center of the city. The streets skirting the kremlin will be reconstructed according to a definite plan. On the kremlin's southern side, the space now occupied by empty lots and warehouses will become a central square with a monument to Lenin. Much of this work has already been carried out.

Similar work is going on in the kremlins of Tula, Gorky, Pskov, in the Siberian town of Tobolsk, and at a number of monasteries and big country estates with their architectural complexes.

SOME of the most intricate and interesting work is being done by Leningrad architects in restoring in the city and suburbs of Leningrad the palaces and their parks, which the Nazis had destroyed. Heavy damage was inflicted during World War II upon Peterhof, an eighteenth-century palace of the czars. For nine hundred days the firing line passed right across the palace grounds. Among the greatest attractions of these grounds were their waterwork displays — fountains, cascades, surprises of various forms and designs. Located along the central axis of the palace façade was the great fountain “Samson Tearing the Lion’s Mouth,” the work of the famous Russian sculptor Kozlovsky. A canal with a row of fountains ran toward the sea along the same axis. All this created a wonderful perspective, vying in beauty with the famous gardens of Versailles.

In view of the great popularity of the Peterhof park among Leningraders, it was decided to restore first the lower gardens and the fountains. However, without the figure of Samson, which had been taken away by the Nazi troops, the composition of the central fountain lacked its former beauty. Since the search for the genuine figure proved to be futile, the Samson fountain had to be restored by working from photographs.

When Samson, newly cast in bronze and gilded, was hauled through the streets of Leningrad, people recognized it and ran after the platform that carried it. The glittering figure of Samson seemed to shine in the rays of the victory won by the Soviet people at the price of great suffering.

In 1952 the outer walls of the Peterhof palace were repaired and the roof restored. Work is now continuing in the interior. Restoration quite as painstaking and elaborate is being carried out by Leningraders in other suburban palaces — the Czarskoye Selo, Pavlovsk, Oranienbaum.

The restoration of the more ancient and beautiful churches is being carried on systematically. The history of the construction of the Church of Polozhenie Riz (“Ordination of Priests”) of the Moscow Kremlin, dating from the fifteenth cen-

tury, can be traced from old chronicles. The church was seriously damaged by the Moscow fire of 1737. It had been commonly believed that its architecture in its present form was the result of hasty reconstruction after the fire. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century sources said outright that the upper part of the church — its vaults and dome — had crumbled and had been completely reconstructed. This theory was seemingly confirmed by the fact that the hipped vault over the church was made of much larger bricks than those in the lower part of the walls. But in the 1940s restoration experts established that the masonry and bricks of the dome were completely identical with those in the rest of the building.

Careful measurements revealed the existence of empty space between the interior vault and the vault covering the entire church and disclosed that over the ancient vault, which had escaped destruction, there was built another one of simplified hipped design.

Restoration experts dismantled the later vault, removed the cornice and the masonry between the bays in the upper part of the walls. The window openings and the altar apses were restored to their original form. A fine decorative belt girdling the building was discovered. The building itself was partly freed from later additions.

Interesting work was also done on the interior of the Church of Ordination of Priests by restoration experts, who established that the original frescoes carried three, and in some places as many as four, layers of paint, added at different times. The upper frescoes, representing mediocre work by indifferent hack artists, hid excellent paintings done in the classic manner of Russian icon painters. This layer proved to be intact, and it was therefore decided to remove the later layers from the entire surface of the walls.

The icons in the iconostasis also proved to have been repainted at a later date, the difference being that only one layer was superimposed on them. When this was cleared, some remarkable samples of Russian seventeenth-century art were revealed.

We have space to mention only a small fraction of what is being done in the Soviet Union in restoring ancient monuments. Much could be said about the restoration of other great historical monuments: country estates, modest dwellings dating from the Middle Ages, and the original and interesting wooden architecture of northern Russia, including both peasant houses and churches. Altogether, in 1959, restoration work was conducted on more than four hundred objects throughout the country. The Soviet people preserve with great care and love their cultural heritage, realizing that relics of ancient culture are the legacy of all mankind.



## How much do you think it costs to dine at the Ritz in Paris?

Imagine sauntering into the famous golden-lining room at the Ritz in Paris. An entourage of beaming waiters and headwaiters greets you and seats you at a table that glitters under a priceless French service. And now! You are served from one of the world's most appreciated kitchens. Perhaps you have Petite Marmite, the glorified soup of the French provinces. Or a succulent Poularde de Bresse smothered in crisp baby potatoes. Finally, fresh peach dripping in brandy. The bill? A

cool \$1.00, price-fixed. Of course, you *could* lose your head and spend hundreds at the Ritz. It's a shamelessly glamorous restaurant. But you would still get a bargain! For *wherever* you eat in France . . . at the Ritz or in a cozy bistro or in an old provincial inn . . . you spend much less than you're used to spending. Yet you eat nothing less than ambrosia. Food is religion throughout France. It's no place to go on a diet.

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# Renaissance in Puerto Rico

## —as seen by a girl of fifteen

THE HIGH SCHOOL GIRL in the foreground of our photograph is fifteen. When she was born, Puerto Rico was a "stricken land."

We wish you could be here to talk to this Puerto Rican girl today.

She might start by telling you about everyday things. The good food her mother buys in the new supermarket. The new house her family lives in. Her father's job in one of Puerto Rico's new factories.

Then, as she warmed up, she would probably have something to say about her lessons and her teachers. How they teach her two languages—Spanish *and* English. How they take her to museums and art exhibitions and concerts.

And she would surely want to tell you about the interesting television programs that she and her classmates watch on Channel Six, an admirable new station in San Juan. Channel Six is

an *educational* station. And it broadcasts to a larger area than any other educational television station in the Western Hemisphere.

Education is one of the chief goals of Puerto Rico's remarkable new Operation *Serenity*. It receives nearly a third of Puerto Rico's entire budget. No other country except Israel spends so much of its budget on education.

Beyond this, the Commonwealth will actually dip into emergency funds to help a gifted student continue his studies.

Today, one third of Puerto Rico's total population is going to school—grade school, high school, vocational school, or one of the island's universities.

Puerto Rico is proud of her spectacular industrial renaissance. But this "sunny, scrubbed, and cultured land" is prouder still of the way her people are putting their prosperity to use.

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◀ Between classes at the Central High School in San Juan. Central High is especially proud of having built its own historical museum, and of having won the Puerto Rican basketball championship. Photograph by Elliott Erwit.



New home movie camera lets you  
bring 'em back *aloud!*

**M**ORE THAN half a million Americans will take movie cameras abroad this year. The majority will be of the conventional silent type. But many will be the new Fairchild Cinephonic, the only home movie camera that records the sounds as it films the sights. *Automatically* synchronized with the action! Of course, you don't have to travel abroad to take advantage of the

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Cinephonic's talents. Just listen to the sounds around you. Words. Laughter. The sounds of fun, the sounds of children. They're all part of the scenes you'll want to preserve forever. *On film.*

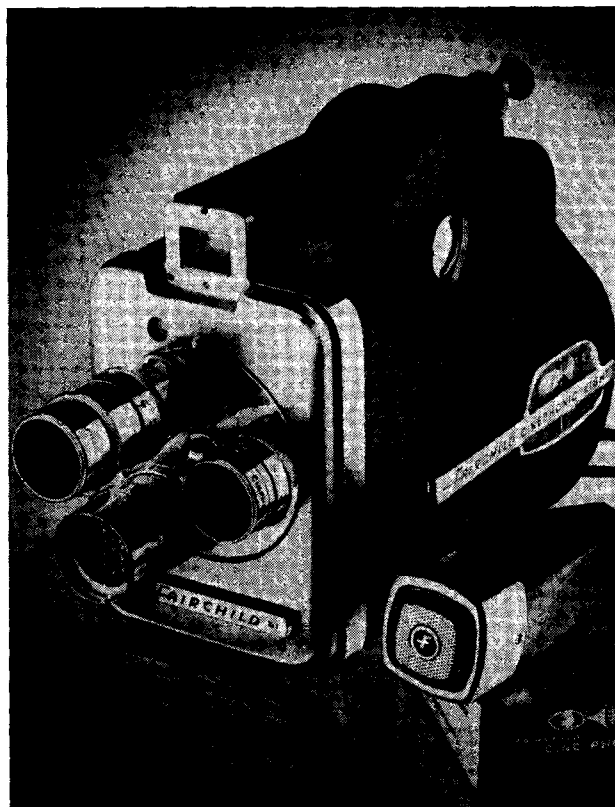
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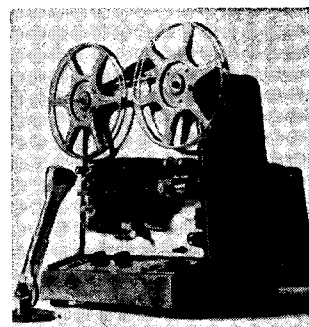
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# SOVIET EPIC SINGERS

BY MUKHTAR AUEZOV



THE rich tradition of the heroic epic and its storytellers has been preserved with extraordinary completeness by the Kirghiz people. One celebrated epic singer was the aged Sagymbai Orzbakov; it was his rendition that the humble teacher Abdrakhamov used when he first set down in writing the great epic poem *Manas*. The writing took four years, both winter and summer, with minor interruptions, from 1923 until 1927. The heroic folk poem was of unprecedented, unheard-of length: 240,000 lines of verse. This was more than twice as long as *Book of the Czars*, the longest epic work in the world, longer than the *Shakhamm* of Firdousi with its 100,000 lines of verse. It was the first time that this particular epic had been set down in writing, after many centuries of oral performance.

The singer Sagymbai recounted how the inhabitants of one valley or another used to make an agreement with him in advance for a performance in the coming winter. The families would get ready for a performance in one of their homes and would store up meat, flour, and butter. The performances of *Manas* would be given throughout the long winter, right up to the first spring sheep hunt.

*Drawing by Yurkunas.*

*Born in 1897 into a nomad family of Kazaks, MUKHTAR AUEZOV is the author of more than twenty plays, many short stories, and a four-volume novel about the famous Kazak hero Abai. He is an authority on the folklore of Asiatic Russia and has been instrumental in transcribing on paper those epics of Homeric length which the famous singers have handed down over the centuries.*

For four years, Sagymbai sang the section of the epic dealing with the exploits of the valiant hero *Manas* for the first full written transcription. This epic is a generic cycle and is sung about a father, *Manas*, his son, *Semetei*, and his grandson, *Seitek*.

Sagymbai the writer considered himself above all a singer of songs about *Semetei*. At his death in his sixty-seventh year he managed to finish only the story of *Manas* and had not yet got to the son and the grandson. After Sagymbai, a second talented epic writer and singer of *Manas*, Sayakpai Karalaev, produced three more cycles in the course of several years. This brought the full text up to 400,000 lines of verse. The septuagenarian Sayakpai finally finished the epic in 1940. Today he performs separate episodes of the epic for the Kirghiz Writers' Union and the philologists and historians of the Kirghiz Academy of Sciences. He appears at folk celebrations, in theaters, and at great folk gatherings in his native Kirghiz Republic. An immense interest in the epic is growing in this area.

I have heard him many times. The last time, he was the honored guest at my 1957 jubilee, when my sixtieth birthday and my fortieth year of artistic endeavor were celebrated. He was among the guests in my home, and he sang an episode about the exploits of *Manas'* son, *Semetei*, for about an hour.

The performers of *Manas* sing the epic with the accompaniment of a musical instrument. They recite some passages, but mainly they sing the declamation and act out the events with the time-

honored techniques of dramatic mimicry. The epic writer Karalaev is a very talented performer, and you can listen to him for hours without tiring. He varies his intonation skillfully by making expressive gestures as he recreates the characters of different heroes or as he sings of violent battle scenes.

The ancient Kirghiz epic singers had faith in inspiration. They believed that, because it was not easy to learn an epic song of as great a length as *Manas*, their gifts had to be supernaturally inspired.

WE FIND epic song performers among all the Siberian peoples. There is much that is interesting and original in the Khakass rendition of heroic storytelling, for example. They usually seat the performer in a place of honor which is spread with a bearskin. He asks for his *chatkham*, a special musical instrument, and usually repeats, "I have come to you on foot. I have no horse. When I begin to tell my stories, my heroes gallop away on their fabulous horses and I can't go after them. Give me my horse and my *chatkham*."

They give him his seven-stringed instrument, and the listeners express the traditional wish that he sing a song which will never end, and that it be frightening in the middle, and that it make them laugh sometimes and cry sometimes.

And the singer announces, "I will sing to trap your hearts." He usually strums an invocation on his *chatkham* and then sings the *khai*, an extemporaneous melody sung in the back of the throat. Next he speaks in prose what he has just sung. The invocation is supposed magically to invoke the patron spirits of epic song. The listeners encourage the singer from time to time by shouting noises of approval, joy, and rapture.

The Shortzy, another Siberian group, sing poems to the accompaniment of the *kobusa*, or *kai komusa*. Their interpretation of epic singing is much like the Khakass. To begin with, there is an invocation sung in the throat either as a prelude or as a separate part of the narration. And then, as in the Khakass interpretation, there is the prose narration. Heroic or epic poems of the Shortzy people have a strict form, with regular strophes at the beginning and end of the song.

Another Siberian people, the Yakuts, have quite a different interpretation of epic singing. After the Kirghiz, the Yakut people have preserved the greatest number of songs in the oral tradition. There are their famous *olonkho*, songs made up of as many as 10,000 lines of verse.

The *olonkho* singer covers his ears during the performance to make his song more resonant in his head, and his whole body sways in time to the

beat. Sometimes the *olonkhusut* (the performer) even closes his eyes during the singing. He does this, as he explains to the audience, to cut himself off completely from his surroundings. The *olonkhusuts* perform the epic unaccompanied by any musical instrument. But even so, the performance is rich with dramatic mimicry, intonation, and characterization. The combination of masterful interpretation and singing makes *olonkho* a vivid folk presentation.

The students of Yakut epics consider that *olonkho* loses a great deal of its charm in being written down; it becomes too literal. Once written down, the epics seem pale and inexpressive in comparison with the live presentation, when the moment determines how the melody will go. Each hero has his own special melody and special voice. When the narrative concerns animals, the *olonkhusut* does unexpected, expressive imitations.

In our time, the *olonkhusuts* appear at private family gatherings, at folk holidays, and in the clubs and theaters of Yakutsk. Sometimes contests between singers are organized in this republic — collective presentations, when one singer tells the story and another sings.

An especially ancient tradition of epic presentation is preserved by the Buryat people. A Buryat singer telling the *uleger* (heroic epic) is like the *shamman* performing his magic rites. Before the arrival of Buryat hunters in a region, Buryats observe certain rites to appease the spirits of the beasts and the forests, on whom the outcome of the hunt depends.

At night the singer-hunter spreads out a white pelt in his hut and lays down on it burned juniper branches and a cup of wine or milk with an arrow stuck in it, and he sings his epic song until the first rays of dawn. Formerly, this virtually sacred act was supposed to be the hunters' gift to the spirits of the Siberian forests. The text of the *uleger* therefore has incantations and magic symbols which are drawn from hunting practice.

The Buryats, like the Kirghiz, believe in *utkha*, the doctrine that hereditary gifts are inspired by supernatural powers. The former Buryat *rapsod* is now the hereditary singer of *uleger*. He is not only a singer, but a priest or *shamman* as well. This individual and this form of presentation probably reproduce the ancient tradition of a special cult of epic singers.

The epic is kept alive by many peoples of the Soviet Union — the Kazaks, the Uzbeks, Turkmen, Tadzhiks, Kara-Kalpaks, and several groups in the Caucasus. These epics are now being published for the general reader in many of the languages of the Soviet Union and are being studied by specialists in the university world.

Translated by Gabriella Azrael.

# TELEVISION IN THE U.S.S.R.

BY WILLIAM S. HALSTEAD

*WILLIAM S. HALSTEAD was supervisory engineer and consultant to the Nippon Television Network Corporation, Tokyo, in establishing the first commercial television service in the Far East. He also is the author of a proposed North Atlantic Relay Communications Plan which is now under consideration in North America and in Europe. President of United, Inc., a global television enterprise, he was invited in 1959 to Moscow to present a paper at the International Electronics Conference, and while there observed the development of television in the Soviet Union.*

ONE of the first things that a visitor to Moscow notices as he approaches the city along the highway from the airport is the familiar pattern of television antennas on the many apartment buildings in outlying sections of the capital. Near the center, where the old and new Moscow blend, one can see on the roofs of the smaller dwellings, some with log walls dating from the eighteenth century, a maze of upthrusting masts and crossbars such as has marked the advent of video broadcasting in most of the countries of the world.

Television has expanded rapidly in the Soviet Union. By the end of 1959, there was a total of 136 television stations in operation, and approximately four million receivers were in use during the latter part of 1959, in contrast to two and a half million at the beginning of the year. Each receiver is estimated to reach an average of seven persons, for the appeal of television is so great that on collective farms, in clubs, and in the recreation centers of industrial plants, viewing groups of one to two hundred are not uncommon.

These receivers cost slightly more than similar models in the United States, ranging between 2000 and 3000 rubles (about \$200 to \$300 in U.S. currency). With recent introduction of installment

buying, based on payroll deductions over a period of months, it is expected that television receivers will find their way into the homes of most Soviet families.

Almost half of the stations now in operation have complete studio facilities and are designated as television centers. These originate their own programs or utilize kinescope recordings and films from Moscow and other sources, and reach large audiences in all of the principal cities of the Soviet Union. Television centers now function in distant sections of the U.S.S.R., such as Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, more remote from Moscow than is New York; in Central Siberian cities, such as Omsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Bratsk, and Irkutsk; and in the isolated southernmost Asiatic area of the Soviet Union, in Alma Ata, Tashkent, Stalinabad, and Ashkhabad, where the existence of many languages and ethnic groups complicates the problem of a national television service. There are television stations north of the Arctic Circle, at the Barents Sea port and military base of Murmansk; and throughout the densely populated European portion of the U.S.S.R., including the important industrial cities extending from the Baltic port of Leningrad to Baku on the Caspian Sea. These and other comparable cities have their own television studios and powerful transmitting equipment. Small communities and farm villages are reached in many areas by means of strategically located low-power transmitters, which relay the programs from the nearest center.

The studios of the Moscow Television Center are housed in a large three-story brick building, located in a fenced-in compound at the base of two television towers which provide two separate transmissions, known as the first and second programs, each on its own channel. When I entered the studio building, one of my first impressions was the striking contrast between the tense, fast-paced atmosphere of most television studios in the United States and the relaxed, easygoing attitude of studio personnel at the Moscow Center. But there was the usual clutter of floor and ceiling lights, cameras, cables, dollies, scenery, and props that are an inherent part of television production facilities, whether in New York or Moscow. I was impressed by the informality and leisurely tempo that appear to characterize rehearsals, although directors were not hesitant in demanding numerous repetitions of scenes until they had achieved the desired effect.

On one of my visits, a children's program was in rehearsal. Two cameras were trained on a group of boys and girls, under guidance of an attractive young woman who served as counselor in conducting nature studies. A third camera was used for close-ups of glass-topped cases of pressed



leaves, butterflies, and other displays. The boys, members of the Young Pioneers, the Soviet equivalent of our Boy Scouts, later in the program were engaged in signaling by semaphore flags before the camera, with laughter and much byplay from the studio group as one of the Pioneers failed to remember certain of the signals.

In a second, smaller studio a hand puppet show was under rehearsal. By use of this traditional art form, a favorite with Russian children, stories were told in an exceedingly simple but effective manner. One camera was directed toward the stage, located above the heads of the puppeteers, whose hands controlled movements of the figures. A second camera intermittently shifted the action to close-ups of a group of children who were reading a large storybook which, page by page, introduced the corresponding scenes enacted by the puppets. The following Saturday afternoon the actual telecast would occur.

About half of the production and technical personnel are women. In the studios, they serve as camera technicians, master-control operators, and directors. Women also play a leading role as commentators and announcers. Moscow's Television Center boasts five "telespeakerinas," who combine the functions of commentator, announcer, speaker, lecturer, and reporter in a manner not yet introduced beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. All five are photogenic and outstanding for their charm, appealing voices, and poise. One of the most widely known is Valia Leontieva, whose beauty is acclaimed throughout Moscow and who has received nearly five hundred proposals of marriage during the past year.

Program transmissions of Moscow's two channels normally run from seven to eleven o'clock on weekday evenings. On Saturdays and Sundays, programs usually start at two o'clock, although telecasts may begin at eleven in the morning or at other hours in the case of special events.

Approximately 60 per cent of the programs are live, and about half of these emanate from the studios of the center; the balance are relayed by microwave from diverse sources within the Moscow area, such as the Bolshoi Theater, famous for its ballet and opera; the huge sports stadium near Moscow University; various concert halls or music institutes; and other cultural centers or parks. Additional live programs originate at Moscow University or other educational centers, particularly the People's Television University, which provides regular academic courses in the natural and technical sciences, economics, art, and literature to thousands of enrolled "telestudents."

About 40 per cent of the programs are motion pictures. Since there are no commercial restrictions, there appears to be no problem in showing

new films as soon as a fortnight after their first showing in theaters. Soviet television audiences are also becoming acquainted with some of the outstanding American and European films. As a result of telecasts of an Italian-American film version of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, stars such as Mel Ferrer, Henry Fonda, and Audrey Hepburn now have become well known to Soviet viewers. A film of *Holiday on Ice*, produced in Moscow with the original music while the American group was in the city, also has been a featured attraction on Soviet television screens.

Wide use is made of educational and documentary films, in which Soviet producers have attained, over the years, an extremely high degree of excellence. Subjects of all types are handled by combinations of cartoon animation and puppetry or by straightforward photography.

Soviet television likewise has been successful in merging in an effective manner the combination of the motion picture film medium and video camera pickup of live on-the-spot news. Television trucks of extremely modern design, in bright colors and glistening chrome, go wherever news is being made. Television and film cameramen cover the events thoroughly, with the result that completed films can be quickly processed at the center and dispatched within hours to outlying regional stations by jet planes. When President Eisenhower visits the Soviet Union this month, there will be few public occasions when he will be out of sight of Soviet news cameramen.

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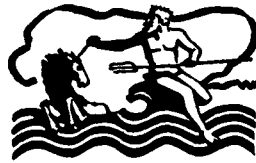
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## ELLERY SEDGWICK

Eighth Editor of the *Atlantic*

1872-1960

It is doubtful whether the *Atlantic* would have survived without the dedication and virtuosity of Ellery Sedgwick. To it he devoted thirty years of his life. He became the owner in 1908, when the fortunes of the magazine were at a desperately low ebb; in three years' time, with his confidence, his far-ranging interests, and his ripening judgment, he had steered the *Atlantic* away from the shoals and into the clear. He brought to his desk some of the very qualities which distinguished our sixth editor, Walter Hines Page, whom he greatly admired: a belief in the expanding responsibility of this country, a desire for more liberal reforms, an insistence on clear, exact writing, and a respect for scholarship. He was at his brilliant best during World War I; he early swung the full force of the magazine to the side of the Allies, and the response to his editing was immediate: the circulation tripled. During his visit to England in 1917, it was he, even more than Edward Bok, who appealed to that shy, conscientious man who was George V. He admired and published Woodrow Wilson; he believed in the League of Nations and strongly opposed our repeated lapses into insularity.

During the complacency of the 1920s his initiative was unchallenged. He was the first editor to accept a short story of Ernest Hemingway's; he denounced the questionable practices of Wall Street in the penetrating papers by William Z. Ripley, the Harvard economist; he challenged the justice of the Sacco-Vanzetti trial; he was the first editor to face the country squarely with the religious issue and to answer it with Governor Alfred E. Smith's ringing affirmation, "Catholic and Patriot" (May, 1927). He was sensitive to questions of faith and drew to our pages the eloquent convictions of Rufus Jones, Dean Inge, Abbot Dimnet, and Samuel McChord

Crothers; the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and Paul Shorey.

He had a remarkable attraction for stories of personal adventure, such as "Black Sheep" by Jean Kenyon Mackenzie, or "The Stump Farm" by Hilda Rose. When he was reading what he believed to be a discovery, the office would echo with his shouts of "Oh, oh, oh!" or his laughter. He made many discoveries, and because he was a believer and an enthusiast, he was occasionally susceptible. "The Lincoln Letters," a forgery, and, some would add, "The Diary of Opal Whiteley" were instances of his misplaced confidence. His support of Franco at the time of the Civil War in Spain caused the only prolonged disagreement within the office during his editorship.

Like every great editor, he relied on a cabinet of friends for some of his most essential advice; Mr. Sedgwick's included Thomas S. Lamont, Newton D. Baker, Walter Lippmann, Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, Justice Felix Frankfurter, and Lewis W. Douglas. He retained the long loyalty of those who supported him at the outset: M. A. DeWolfe Howe, MacGregor Jenkins, Reginald Washburn, Teresa S. Fitzpatrick, and Florence Converse. The final vote was always his, and he did not delegate to juniors easily, but when trust was given, he respected, even encouraged, disagreement.

To work with Ellery Sedgwick was an education, and of his many lieutenants he inspired the affection of Charles R. Walker, Quincy Howe, Theodore Morrison, Edward A. Aswell, and Joseph Barber, Jr.; they, together with the present editor and publisher, felt at first hand his magnetism and saw the skill and decision with which he preserved the New England character of the *Atlantic* as he brought it to a national readership.



# HOW MY LOVE WAS SAWED IN HALF

BY ROBERT FONTAINE

*Playwright, novelist, and short-story writer, ROBERT FONTAINE is perhaps best remembered for his Broadway success, THE HAPPY TIME. Fontaine fans will enjoy his most recent book, THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION, a humorous guide to the writing trade recently published by The Writer.*

WHEN I was about twelve, or maybe I was fourteen, I ran away from home one summer. My home was a lovely, cool home. The bees would buzz in our flowerful back yard; great monarch butterflies would arch their way about the phlox and verbenas. There would be watermelon on the vine, and red tomatoes. It was all neatly arranged and predictable. That was why I ran away.

My mother and father, very strict parents indeed, thought I had gone to summer camp. My Uncle Louis, a great lover of good wine, thought I had gone to summer camp. All the neighbors thought so, too.

I started for summer camp, but I got off the train because I saw a carnival setting up. I intended to stay only until the next train north. Then I remembered the advice of my uncle: "If you do not see all of this world, you will not be ready for the next."

The carnival was bright as a fairy tale, as noisy

and exciting as a hockey game, as colorful as a birthday party.

I roamed about in a daze, smelling the popcorn and candied apples, listening to the singing of the barkers, tasting maple leaves made of sugar, and riding swiftly to the skies in a make-believe airplane.

When the next train had long gone by, and the next after that, I was still wild-eyed and enamored. I was drunk with sound and color. I was in love with movement.

How could my camp, my family, my home, my school, my life vanish so utterly from my heart? What was this magnificence that now took the place of all those small, concrete things that had been my life? It had no name, but it sang and it filled me and made me drunk.

There was nothing I wanted more to do than to stay with the carnival forever. Here, at last, was the place for me. Here was made solid my dream. Life at home, I used to tell myself in the

*Lithograph by Reginald Marsh. Courtesy of the Print Department, Boston Public Library.*



quiet of my small room, was not the way it should be. Life should be vastly more entertaining, more filled with surprises, more provocative of laughter. Here, in the Universal Greater Shows, it was.

I came down out of the sky and I went about asking for work. I would do anything. I was a strong boy, big for my age. Could I sell tickets? Could I care for the raging lions? I loved animals. Might I help swirl those Western apples in the maple candy coating? My mother had taught me much about cooking, and besides I was a Boy Scout.

No. No. No one wanted me. I was in my own world, and they did not recognize me. Huge men with sweating faces and beer breaths looked at me and smiled, nodding no. Big women in flamboyant dresses patted my shoulder and said no.

I came to the fortuneteller, a thin, great-eyed woman with red cheeks and arms covered with golden bracelets. Could I not help her?

"Let me see your palm," she said. I held out my shaking hand. She looked at it for a long time. "You will be disappointed in love," she said. After a moment she added wistfully, "But then, who isn't, eh?"

"Were you?" I asked.

"Always. First Hypo the Hypnotist. Then Greco the Strong Man, and even Haha the Laughter, who runs the House of Mirrors."

"I'm sorry," I said. "About you, I mean."

She felt on my head. "The bumps are good. The bump here of progress is well along, and this one here, of shrewdness, is of significant size. Perhaps I can do something. Because of my second sight, I have great influence here. Except in matters of love."

"Oh, please do help me," I begged.

"Come back at dark. You can sleep tonight in the wagon in back. You must wash the dishes though, and stay on your own side of the room."

"Yes, ma'am," I said.

I WANDERED around excitedly after that. I saw everything. At last I came to Hypo the Hypnotist. His face was painted as if he were not alive, like a strange man — all white, with two red dots at the cheeks.

I watched eagerly as he sawed a woman in half; sawed in half a beautiful girl before my very eyes. I was stunned. Never had I seen this sort of thing, nor had I ever seen a girl so brave and beautiful. She lay there with her head extended from a box, smiling so beautifully and lovingly. She was the girl I had always pictured when I read love stories. She was the girl I had always

dreamed about — golden hair, blue eyes, a bright smile, and brave and true.

It did not bother her at all when the saw went through her. She still smiled. And then, miracle! In a few minutes she was restored to perfect wholeness. What lovely magic!

"A trick," some bumpkin beside me said.

"Done with mirrors," a fat woman supplied.

"Have you been in the Mirror House?" the first one asked. The woman nodded. "Exactly the same sort of thing. You go here and there, and you look for people and they are gone, and then you are surrounded by yourself, and then by a dozen samples of other people. It is all trickery."

I shrugged. Some things might be trickery, but I had stood very close indeed to Hypo and with my own eyes I had seen the saw go through the beautiful Belle-Linda and I had seen her face become white. Perhaps these other people did not have the bumps of shrewdness and progress that I had.

I went back to the fortuneteller, Ramia, and she said, "You can stay with me. There is enough to eat. People will talk, but let them."

"About what?" I asked.

Ramia smiled. "About everything."

I stayed and helped Ramia. She was not old, but she was like a mother to me. She cooked for me and washed and pressed my clothes. Now and then one of the men in the show would come to see her and would notice me and smile. "He is a big boy."

"I am taking care of him like a son," Ramia would say.

"Like a son, eh? Ha ha."

"Like a son. He is a good boy and wants to learn."

I helped her a great deal. I went in the midst of the crowd and struck up friendships. I told my friends how Ramia had predicted things for me that happened and how she had told me everything about my past. I helped her business very much.

After a few weeks I was madly in love with Belle-Linda, and I told Ramia as much. She laughed. "In a way it is too bad, but then perhaps it will be a lesson. You love the impossible and so does every man. You love a blonde, blue-eyed creature, and yet, with the other side of your heart, you love a dark, brown-eyed creature."

"I love Belle-Linda," I said stoutly, "and no one else, except perhaps my mother — and you."

The fortuneteller hugged me. "You are a nice boy. Love whom you please while you may."

It came near the time for me to leave. The camp would soon be over, and I had to get home. I had sent letters to my chums to forward to my

parents. They were the same letters I always sent from the same camp. But the day came when I was due home. Finally I had to leave this wonderland.

Before I went, I wanted to kiss Belle-Linda and tell her I loved her for her beauty and her bravery. I tried several times to speak to her when she was about to be sawed in half, but Hypo always pushed me away.

I never saw her except when she was thus confined until the day before I was to leave. I was wandering about near the merry-go-round when I saw her golden hair and her trim figure. I ran, but she disappeared into the House of Mirrors. I yelled after her. I raced toward the House, showed my pass, and went in.

"Be careful, son," the barker said. "Strange things can happen here."

I ignored him. I went into the labyrinth and was appalled. It was my first time, and I saw myself everywhere, reproduced a hundred times. I felt against the glass and found an aisle, and then more glass and more reflections of me. I was lost, surrounded by myself. I was alone with thousands of myself, and I was lonely.

"Belle-Linda," I called. "Dear Belle-Linda!"

I waited. Suddenly I saw her reflection, golden and blue-eyed and beautiful. When I reached for her, she was glass. And then she was gone. I was alone and afraid again. Perhaps I would never find my way out.

Then there appeared another girl, almost the opposite of Belle-Linda but with the shoes and stockings of my love. This other girl was dark-eyed, black-haired, and also heartbreakingly beautiful. It was hard for me to know which was the more lovely.

The dark one came toward me, and then appeared in a dozen mirrors, and then disappeared. Abruptly, I was beside the blonde. She touched me and smiled. "I am Belle," she said.

"I love you," I managed, breathlessly. "I have often seen you."

"You are a sweet boy," she said, and she kissed me. She turned and was gone in the maze.

In another moment the dark girl was beside me. She laughed like bells and said, "I am Linda."

"Linda?"

"You are a sweet boy."

She kissed me, and her kiss was warm and loving. Then she, too, was gone, and I was alone with a hundred images of myself, wandering about.

In the end I found my way out, and I was alive and happy in the open air. The man at the ticket window said, "Was it exciting?"

"Oh, yes," I said firmly.

I raced to Ramia and told her what had happened. "The girl, the one Hypo saws in half, she kissed me. But another one, a dark one, quite different, also kissed me."

When I had calmed down Ramia stroked my head and said, "I told you. There will always be two women, quite different. The one whose face you know so well, and the other, who is quite the opposite and whom you do not know at all."

"But is she one woman?" I asked.

"Now she is one; then again, she is two. But we must clean you up and arrange your clothes and get you ready for the train. I hope you found adventure. Not many boys have this sort of summer camp."

I hugged her. "Oh, it has been so exciting. And I am in love. And I am growing up quickly."

"Good for you."

When I got home everything was the same. It was the same cool world, with quiet speech and watermelon on the vine and the giant butterflies in the yard and the August Yellow Transparents now ripe on the tree.

"You did not get very tanned," my mother said.

"I kept out of the sun."

My father said, "Good boy. Too much sun is not good."

Later, my Uncle Louis, full of wine, said, "You have been up to something. You went away with clouds in your eyes, and now there are stars. You must tell me sometime."

In the dead of melancholy winter, I told him one day. He explained to me, "Ah, well, there are two girls, you see. One is the head, and she is folded up, so. The other is the feet, and she is folded up, so. When the man saws, he saws between the two. Understand? It is all a trick."

I smiled and pretended I believed him. He did not understand. He was not, perhaps, in love with anyone at the time.

## An Atlantic "First" by JACKSON BURGESS



JACKSON BURGESS has worked as a newspaperman and as a teacher in North Carolina and in Illinois, where he was editor of the CHICAGO REVIEW in 1952. For the past two years he has been a lecturer in the English department of the University of California. This is his first appearance in a magazine.

THE lieutenant put on that distant and untouchable expression, that look with which a man disguises himself before doing something unfair in the name of duty, and said, "I don't like leaving him this way."

The sergeant knew at once what was coming and shrugged. "He's been there a long time already," he said, but he spoke without hope, regretting that at times in the past he had hurt the lieutenant's pride, playing the enlisted man just the way the lieutenant was now playing the officer. The appeal in his voice was useless. In fact, it appeared to settle the lieutenant's uneasiness into a decision.

"Now that we've found him," the lieutenant said, "we're responsible. The registration of the dead is a pretty serious matter. If it was a German, we could just leave him here and report it, but he's one of ours and somebody'll have to stay." He was all duty, but then he softened, for he and the sergeant had been cowards together for a long time and he valued the sergeant's friendship. He said, "Would you mind?"

He knows, thought the sergeant. Why should I deny it, if he knows already? But he said, stiffly, "No." Just to keep things clear, he said, "I'm not going to sit up there and hold his hand, but I'll wait here until you get back."

"If I can't get a graves registration team right away, I'll come back and pick you up," said the

lieutenant. "After it's reported, he's their responsibility."

"Have you got anything I can read?" the sergeant asked.

"Nothing but some manuals."

The driver didn't have anything either, or said he didn't. The lieutenant got into the jeep, and as the driver started the engine he said, "If you smoke, you'd better get away from the boxes. This grass is awful dry."

The sergeant nodded, running through his mind a few half-joking things he might say. "Don't forget where you left me." "Hurry back." "Keep in touch." He said none of them, and when the driver put the jeep in gear, he turned his back on it, even though the lieutenant called "Take it easy" as the jeep clattered away.

Alone, the sergeant instantly felt a tug of temptation to go look at the body up there in the brush beyond the railroad track, where he had found it when they were checking to see if the switch on the spur track was working. He recognized the temptation as pure perversity, for one of the rules he lived by was: Never look at the dead. This was one of the fetishes with which the sergeant had tricked out his life; he wore so many that he jangled when he moved. Never lie in bed; get up the instant you awake and stay up until you're sleepy. Look directly at people you are talking to. Don't act too much like a soldier, above all



not too much like a sergeant. Don't be too neat. The rules multiplied themselves endlessly, for as soon as he'd mastered one he had to have a new one. They aimed, generally, at making him as nearly invisible as he could be, but not all of them had even as much meaning as that; they were simply fetishes.

His walk, for instance. He had a certain way of walking which he had come to believe was the only safe way to move, not because it was safe in any real way, but because it was necessary to have *some* rule. After all, if there is no rule, how can you feel the safety of doing the right thing? This is the reason why he had never looked at a body, although he had seen many of them. Now, by a piece of bad luck, he had looked at the man over across the tracks. It was almost as if he had walked into a trap. Who would ever have expected to find a body here, sixty miles behind the lines, where the fighting had been over for months? Yet here, inexplicably and disastrously, it was. The way he had happened to find it had a sinister feel to it. The lieutenant might just as easily have walked up to look at the switch himself instead of sending the sergeant. Even after getting up there, he might not have noticed the body if he hadn't had his attention caught by a flock of sparrows twittering in the brush. Even when he'd seen two boots, toes up, lying in the grass, he had not been quick enough to guard himself, but had stepped across to the far side of the roadbed to get a better look and — then it had been too late.

"I won't hold his hand." That had been the wrong thing to say, just the kind of thing you don't say. Twice he had been caught out.

HE WALKED to the stack of ammunition boxes that were the reason for his being there. He couldn't blame *them*, though, for they were also the reason he was sixty miles behind the lines instead of sixty yards. He and the lieutenant had been brought back here to survey, inspect, and catalogue captured German ordnance stocks. At first they had been so delirious and unbelieving that they had laughed and whooped through every day. Then they had settled into peaceful faith, spending whole, long, luminous fall days driving slowly along narrow dirt roads lined with poplars, parking to watch the peasants in the fields, drinking wine at crossroads wine-shops. Now they were finding they'd spent them too fast and too carelessly. The job was just about done.

In this place, there was not even a day's work. Along the siding, boxes of rifle ammunition were

stacked; most of them had been pried open by looters, the bright, brass cartridges scattered in the dust and the weeds. Back toward the road was a smaller stack of boxes — grenades, mortar shells, flares, and smoke bombs. There had been a place for trucks to turn around, already going back to grass, and a tar-paper guard shack.

He picked up one of the cartridges in the grass and rolled it in his fingers. It was beginning to corrode; the brass case was flecked with verdigris and the steel jacket of the bullet had a whitish coat of oxide. He rubbed with his thumb, then dropped the bullet.

He had gone to look at the switch without waiting to be told or leaving it to the lieutenant. Bad luck doesn't come uninvited; you do something wrong and call it up. He stood for a moment futilely going back in his mind, undoing the whole thing. Then he kicked at the nearest crate, turned about, and walked over to the little tar-paper shack. It was just big enough for a man to sit inside on a camp stool in bad weather, with his rifle on his knees, watching the stacks of ammo and the road up to the highway.

He stepped inside and looked at the writing in pencil on the walls. He didn't know much German, but he could tell what the writing said, or at least the kind of thing it said. Nothing official. It didn't look like rules or messages or signs but just the things that lonely sentries had written during long, hot afternoons. A couple of entries were obviously names and home towns. One looked like some kind of rhyme, with the last word *nimmer*. Never. Or was it forever? He couldn't remember. But, he thought, they come close to meaning the same thing. There was a dirty picture, with something scrawled beneath it. Women, and home. He looked again at the verse ending *nimmer* and felt sad for himself and for the German who had written out the poem and for the dead man over beyond the tracks by the switch.

He looked out the door of the shack, and he could see the switch-stand up on the railroad fill, no more than thirty yards away. The sentry had been sitting just here, he was sure, when the other man had come over the fill and stopped by the switch, suddenly seeing the stacked ammunition and the guard shack. The sentry would have been nervous, left out there alone, knowing that the enemy was near, and he could have fired from inside the shack without showing himself.

The sergeant turned and squatted and looked carefully around the floor of the shack. He saw the empty cartridge case against the wall at the back, and with his forefinger he rolled it out to where he could pick it up. The mouth of the case was slightly blackened, and the rest of it was

corroded, just like the one he'd picked up outside. He held it in his hand and stood up, backing into the sunlight and feeling the breeze — a little cool these last few days — that he hadn't noticed before. He was doing everything wrong. Imagining the thing had been a mistake, looking for the cartridge case had been stupid, and now, holding it, gazing on it, was the worst of all. He felt he had betrayed himself so many ways that he might as well give up. There was even a silly little thrill in dropping the shell into his pocket; not just flirting with a taboo, but grabbing at it. He felt a little drunk, the kind of drunk you get not from liquor but from exhaustion.

He sat in the doorway of the shack smoking a cigarette and grimly saying good-bye to his luck, and then he walked around for a while, looked over the crates, and finally went up and stood on the tracks to see if he could spot the jeep coming back or the graves registration truck. There was nothing on the tan road, nothing in the square fields of tan stubble, nothing on the gray hills but the gray-green olive groves. North, the mountains where they had fought that spring hunched over the valley; south, the mountains where they had fought the fall before were pale as a bank of cloud. The sergeant put the sole of his boot lightly on one rail of the track to see if he could feel any vibration. Then he bent over and touched it, and finally he got down and put his ear to it. It had a dry, rusty smell, and upon his cheek it was rough and warm. Not a sound.

He got up and rubbed his hands together where the stones of the ballast had left red imprints. With a step he measured the awkward distance from one tie to the next. He knew where he was going and what he was doing. Enough of his old caution remained with him so that he kept his eyes on his feet and made no conscious commitment, but he knew. Pure bad luck had destroyed his chances of keeping the hundred small treaties he had made with himself; maybe it wasn't too late to treat with the enemy, to change sides. There was that, and there was the nasty thrill of disgust. The slight wave of nausea that he felt as he came to the place and squatted on the ties to look down at the body in the splotchy shadows was just what he had come back for.

He looked his fill. The body lay on its back, arms and legs spread out, steel helmet tipped forward. The shadows of the runty, gray, almost leafless trees among which he had fallen made it hard to discern detail, but the sergeant could see the raveled threads that showed where the bullets had gone into his chest, and he thought he could make out, in the blackest shadow, the one beneath the front of the helmet, a fine white line like the ridge of a nose. As little as he saw, however, this

look committed him. He had given up his old magic, for sure, and it was a relief. He even felt, in this moment of abandon, a conviction that he had never really believed. What he was doing now might be indecent, but it had needed doing for a long time. He had just been putting it off. It had not been for himself that he had always turned away his eyes, but for the dead; not for squeamishness or dread, but for a kind of mealy-mouthed decency and propriety, a reluctance to indulge his own hunger to know, to see.

HE SIDLED, without quite rising, over the rail. When he came to the edge of the roadbed, he was six or seven yards from the body and just above it. God help me, he thought, and he put his hands on the gravel at either side and slid on his rump halfway down the slope. He paused and looked while the sparrows in the trees above the dead man fled him, twittering through the brush. He came the rest of the way and ended up on his haunches at the feet of the body. There was an odor, but less than he had expected. Hunched there beneath the scrubby branches, with the roadbed at his back, he felt secure and leisured, and he took his time. The nausea came back, and he waited, looking at the bottom of the dead man's boot, until it passed. Then he began his examination, but without moving.

The skin upon the face in the shadow of the helmet was so dark that he first thought the man must be a Negro. It wasn't that kind of darkness, however, but more like the bluish sheen on the barrel of an old rifle that can look black or, in a change of light, silver. At first he thought the face was mutilated, but as his eyes penetrated the shadow he saw that it was unmarked, but the nose had somehow shrunk or fallen in. The white line he had seen had been a trick of light upon the ridge of skin puckered along the ruin of that nose. From it, two deep wrinkles stretched to the lip that curled sneering upward. The mouth was drawn back almost into a circle, revealing the front teeth, upper and lower, gleaming startlingly white. There was, the sergeant saw, no face. There was nothing that showed, as the face shows, a man. Some of the form remained, but nothing of the substance; yet it managed to be hideous. Despite the sour spit that ran between his teeth, the sergeant continued to peer. He looked for eyes, but there were none; only two holes shaped like the idea of eyes, but containing nothing, the blackest black.

He swallowed, conquering disgust by keeping his purpose in mind, and was proud to find that he could do it. He had thought at first that one

straight look into the face of death would be all it took, but finding no face he could confront, he saw it would be more complicated than that. He had to do this carefully. He had to note every detail, think about it and understand it. He must miss nothing. It must all be reduced to the simplest and most material facts; it must be known.

He examined the odor in his nostrils with analytic calm. It wasn't, in itself, very bad. It was sweet, the way rotten hay is sweet, but dry. A strange smell, really, not exactly like anything else. Musty, like a box of old clothes opened after fifty years in a dry attic. Sharp, without being strong. Rich.

The middle of the body, between the pelvis and the bottom of the ribs, had caved in. The khaki uniform had faded and was marked with brownish stains where rain had pooled, then soaked through. There was no trace of bloodstain, not even on the raveled threads that stood up around the edges of the three bullet holes in the front of his shirt, one at the inside edge of the left front shirt pocket, one just under the collar on the right side, and the other lower down beneath the arm. The rain had washed the blood away, of course. He saw an ant, a big, black one, walking slowly up the underside of the man's sleeve, touching its feelers to one side and then the other. He and his kind had probably helped with the cleaning of that shirt, but there was nothing left for him now. He was heading for the throat, but those dry, yellow, ropy cords between the faded collar and sharp, blackened chin didn't look as if they offered anything more to the ant or the bird or the fox.

He wondered what would happen next. That horny, blackened skin would go. It would dry to dust, if the weather stayed clear for a while, and drop away. Or if the rain began, it would soften and molder and be washed away. The sinews, too, would go in time. Then there'd be only bone, a skeleton like the ones in pictures or anatomy classes, except that this one would be in uniform. But the cloth would have gone by that time, except for scraps. There'd be the steel helmet; it was, he saw, a little rusty along the visor edge, but it would still last a long time. There'd be the brass buttons, but they were already covered with green. The boots? Mildew covered the uppers. Mold like white moss had taken hold here and there. Mold is a plant. It is feeding on the boots. The iron in the helmet is oxidizing, combining with air and with the oxygen in water, so that the atmosphere is feeding on the helmet. The earth beneath him will take the cloth, the skin, and in time the bones. The odor that I smell is him going into the air; that part is almost over. The part with the ants and the flies

and birds and animals has been over for a long time; that was first. But all of it is the same. The mold eating the boots is no different from the ants taking the blood or the crows taking the eyes or the earth taking the skin dust or the atmosphere taking nitrogen molecules.

He bent closer to look at that mold on the boots. He could see the individual plants of the mold, hundreds of stubby hairs rooted in the leather like a stand of wheat upon a hillside. Seen up close, the mold had a bluish tint. He noticed that the eyelets of the bootlaces were suffering their own dissolution, erupting in soft, crumbling, powdery oxide.

Very interesting, all in all.

HE ROSE from his crouch at the dead man's feet and sidled around one outturned boot, toe to the side. As he did so, he almost stepped on the carbine lying in the weeds. The barrel was streaked with orange rust, the webbing sling was white with mildew. He picked it up and tried to draw the bolt, but now it was one piece with the receiver. He laid the carbine back beside the body and saw the chevrons on the sleeves. This man had been a staff sergeant, just as he was. He knelt slowly in the stiff grass beside the outflung arm and looked down at the hand at the end of the sleeve. It lay palm up, the fingers wide apart and slightly curled. A little hardened flesh padded the heel of the hand and the base of the thumb, but that was all. The skin, blackened here as upon the face, was drawn tight and had parted in places. The tendons showed through as flat, yellow ribbons, looking hard and strong, and the nails were still there, long and slightly curved.

As he looked down into that hand, into the palm and the hard fingers cupped in the grass as if in grasping or in offering up — but that didn't matter any more — the sergeant felt himself fill with the strength he had come for. The sour spit was gone from his mouth, the choking from his throat, the flutter from his wrists. He was whole and calm, with the serenity of perfect courage, knowing he could do whatever he had to do. He touched. His hand came forward and his fingers slid easily and naturally into the cupped fingers of that dead hand, into the clasp that was still and sure. The hand was smooth and quite dry and hard with the fragile hardness of paper or eggshell, and as its dry hardness embraced his own weak, living fingers, the sergeant could have wept for joy. He was no longer afraid. There was nothing to fear. Death does not come, he thought, but is come to, and in the holy exaltation



of the knowledge he caressed the hand he held, loving purely the man he was with, the transfigured sergeant.

Then his fingers touched something warm. It moved. He lifted his hand and saw upon a dead finger a wedding ring. The sun had warmed the gold, and it glinted palely. It was not corrupted.

The spit came back between his teeth, and he wiped his hand upon the ground, beginning to tremble. Into his mind came the poem on the wall of the guard shack: *nimmer*. Women and home. He whispered, "Bastard," but he couldn't look now into that blackened face and those eyeless eyes. He couldn't do it. Death he could face, but not a dead man. He began waddling backward. His legs were stiff and painful and as he

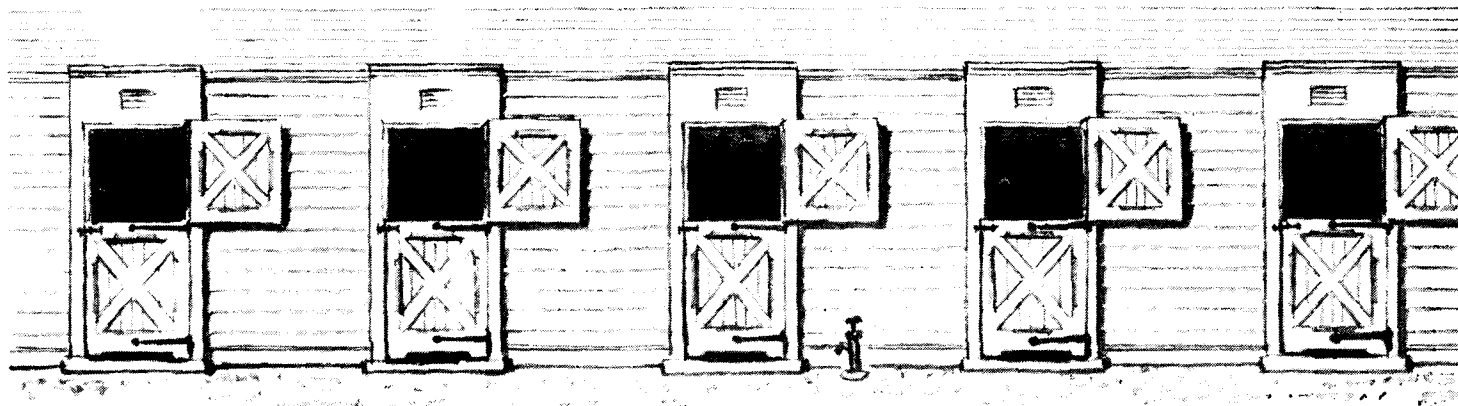
rose he half tripped, catching himself but frightened by his own sudden movement so that his withdrawal became a rout and he scrambled in panic up the roadbed and tumbled, shaking all over, down into the grass on the far side. He sat there brushing his uniform, and then put his face in his hands and felt his flesh upon his flesh. He took the empty cartridge case from his pocket, the one he'd picked up in the shack, half turned, and threw it across the tracks. He could almost have laughed at the terrible, silly desperation of what he'd done, at the hope of ever coming to terms with the strange, cold, impassive sergeant lying over there among the trees with his gold ring on his finger. He had forgotten that you can't make a deal when there's nobody to deal with.

PETER KANE DFAULT

## HORSE AND HAMMER

His massive dignity — sixteen  
hundred and forty pounds, the poll  
of his hemp-hung colossal head  
high as the crossbar on the weighing stall,  
his half-ton haunches flared  
off flanks as limber as steel, great crest  
like the hump of a mastodon —  
discount. LADIES AND GENTS, YOU HEARD  
WHAT THE MAN SAID.  
THIS HORSE GOES TO KILL. At best,  
the auctioneer drops, momentarily awed,  
into intelligibility. SEVENTY-NINE  
CENTS ON THE POUND. A fat man  
in the ring with a horsewhip  
and cigar is making the titan  
dance. (A cat couldn't skip  
livelier, wince with more exquisite  
nerve to the whip's crack.) God  
knows he looketh afar off,  
who carried for twenty-four years  
white clouds and the Catskills on his back,  
who wheeled in the width of a turned clod,  
or, winters, warmed up a Dutchman's barn  
with the steady furnace of his heart. . . .  
At one hundred twenty-five, he's gone  
to the fat horse butcher. Gone  
to the dogs; to glue, his hoofs and ears  
who could have carried Charlemagne  
to the Elbe with all his armor on.

CHAIM RAPHAEL, who has published under the pseudonym Jocelyn Davey, is a former Oxford don, currently a British government official, who draws upon his experience for his fiction. His first novel, *A CAPITOL OFFENSE*, was a spoof detective story set in the British Embassy in Washington, and his detective, *Ambrose Usher*, appears in his other novels. He has also written a number of short stories.



## THE SPECIAL CASE BY CHAIM RAPHAEL

I HAVE to pass the racecourse outside Wingfield whenever I drive down to spend a weekend at Hatwick Hall with Elaine and Neville Blond. As the short village street slips by and I feel the tall familiar gates of the racecourse approaching, I get myself ready for the swift look that I will turn on the long rows of low dark-green stables before accelerating for the open road that lies ahead and the last four miles before Hatwick. I still cannot quite accept the fact that these stables house horses now, and not human beings. If someone is in the car with me, I begin to wonder as we approach the racecourse if I should try to explain. I know I cannot, and resolve to be silent.

For this is my war story, my blitz story, my youth story, and probably a lot more. I am the sole survivor, the Ancient Mariner himself. Perhaps it is odd for me to assume this role, since I was something of an outsider when hundreds of German refugees were imprisoned in this racecourse in 1940. Yet even at the time I knew that, in one sense, this was my experience rather than theirs and that when it was all over the memory of it would be left in my care.

Not that it was in any way grim for me. On the contrary, it was a brilliantly exciting time. Above us they were fighting the Battle of Britain. The sirens would wail from a long way off, with a timing quite unrelated to the planes or vapor trails that we would see winding through the clear

blue sky. A few bombs now and then would plow up the harmless fields, and here and there would be the wreckage of a plane, a Heinkel or a Spitfire. Down below, the racecourse hummed with an existence of its own, like some Greek city-state, with its slaves and rulers, endless intrigue, high philosophy and low comedy. From behind the encompassing walls, the citizens plotted relentless war against the enemy outside — not the Nazis, of course, but that other, more personal enemy, officialdom.

When I had first met them, they were an anonymous mob to me. Then they had ceased to be a mob and became cases, each of them, in his view, a special case deserving priority. And finally they had stopped being cases and became Kettner the socialist, Stoessel the mechanic, Weissbrot the Talmudist, Kindler the crook, Sommettski the *shlemiel*, and so on in their hundreds. Behind them in London, and pulling all the strings, was Sir Gordon Tyrell, head of the Lord Lieutenant's Office, as unpredictable a guardian of security as England produced even in those unpredictable days.

The German refugees in Britain had been rounded up and interned when France fell, not because they were likely to be sympathetic to Hitler when he landed at Dover but because they seemed an irritatingly alien element in the cozy and familiar society that was cheerfully girding

itself to meet invasion. To the refugees, this internment was almost a heavier affront than the anti-Jewish laws which had driven them from Germany. They were insulted and terrified. Dumped suddenly into racecourses in various parts of England, they felt swindled out of the honor due to them as the enemy's first victims, and they were terrified because Hitler was on the doorstep. Some wanted to get out of England as fast as they could, others wanted to be free to fight him, and all of them felt a sense of terror at being cooped up behind high walls, under the supervision of men alien to them — with guns.

THEIR sense of confusion and fear made them at first sight a pitiable group, or worse, to the major commanding the camp and his officers. Until the refugees arrived, with hardly a day's warning, in a huge convoy of army lorries, Wingfield Racecourse had been a prison camp for a much more agreeable type of person, the German Nazis whom the authorities had rounded up or captured in the early fights at sea. A fine body of men, Major Blackwood told me: proud, independent, capable, healthy; a pleasure to look after them. And suddenly he had lost his beloved Nazis and been given these unfit, middle-aged wrecks, whining at their fate, pressing to get out. Above all, there was this constant screaming about their papers, their passports, their visas. They were driving him mad.

He told me this when I arrived, and I could sympathize with his feeling of helplessness. I had been dropped into the situation with equal lack of warning. Sir Gordon Tyrell had sent for me at Oxford, where I had thought to spend a last quiet week before reporting to the R.A.F. My name had come to him somehow; wires had been pulled; the R.A.F. had agreed to wait; and I found myself on my way to Wingfield. There was a special job to be done there, Tyrell explained. Of the thousands of refugees whom they had locked up in different parts of England and the Isle of Man, a few hundred had been pulled out and sent down to Wingfield because they claimed to be transmigrants who had visas pending for the United States. Wingfield, thirty miles south of London, was convenient for access to the U.S. Consulate. My instructions were simple: get their visas for them and get them out of England. The fewer Germans around during an invasion, the better for everybody.

There were, of course, difficulties. For one thing, there was the unfortunate mistake about the passports. When the refugees had been swooped on, one of the instructions given to

the police had somehow led to all their most precious documents being taken from them, "for examination." These documents, the lifeblood of the harried refugee, had been collected at a central point — some garage in the north of England — and then lost. It was unfortunate. There were also problems of wives, children, and relatives who would have to go too and were not conveniently locked up in a racecourse for easy processing. There was a slight problem of shipping. And finally — something they tended to overlook — there was a war on.

It was this last point that I found myself wanting to express when I entered the racecourse on my first morning, to be swallowed up in a second by the surging crowd of refugees clamoring for their cases to be heard. They had been told that someone was being sent from London to solve their problems, and they wanted to lose no time in telling me what to do. Their visas. Their wives. Their luggage. Why had England done this? They were ill. Their businesses would collapse. They had a brother in desperate danger in France, an uncle in Mexico who should be cabled to. . . .

I tried to bear with it for a while, getting ready for what I knew would be the worst moment of the first day. To help them, I had somehow to create documents, and I had prepared cards on which they were to give me all the information they could about their families, passports, guarantors, luggage, and so on. New photographs would have to be taken; and then, by collating all this with anything that would come in from other places, such as the refugee organization at Holborn House or the U.S. Consulate, some new documentary personalities could emerge, ready for the sacerdotal stamp of authority. My cards were an essential first step, but when I produced them and explained, shouting out the instructions in my best German from the steps of the Members' Bar, the expected howl of rage arose from the crowd: "More papers!" "Enough of papers!" "They have destroyed our papers!" Behind them, the Tommies watched it all, silent and uncomprehending. The howls began to subside as the cards were passed around and the men disappeared to fill them out. Quiet descended.

Back across the road in Major Blackwood's room an hour later, I took a grateful swig at the tall whisky and soda that he put before me. We were sitting drinking silently when I happened to put my hand into my pocket and found that something like a dozen notes had apparently been palmed on me, presumably during the first rush of the crowd. They were almost all of a pattern: "Please help me." "I am a special case." "My wife is ill: unless I am freed. . . ." Full names, date, and place of birth and other biographical details were



meticulously appended. But one was a carefully written note in German and unsigned. It said:

We were almost all rescued from Nazi concentration camps through the help of England. This we will not forget. Now I have read in the *Manchester Guardian* three days ago that a debate was held in Parliament on the internment. The Government said that a mistake had been made and would be put right as soon as possible. In the middle of a war, the English Parliament takes time to defend the homeless refugee. This we will not forget.

I showed the note to the major and translated it for him.

"Hm," he grunted. "No signature, eh? Doesn't want any favors. Now that's what I call a really special case."

IT WAS two weeks before I was ready for the first bus load to go up to the U.S. Consulate in London to see about visas, and then it was only by working very long hours in the stable we had set aside as an office. During this time, documents had been pouring in from relatives, refugee organizations, and consulates all over the world. Fifteen of the refugees had been organized into a clerical staff under a man I had selected for the job — Baumgart, a quiet former insurance official, who ran the office stable with Teutonic efficiency. To maintain contact, I was dashing up and down between Wingfield and London on a motor bike I had nobbled from the army, with saddlebags chock-full of cards and papers. In London, with the blitz taking hold, it was becoming impossible to get around easily except on something like a motor bike, and I had many people to see, in many government departments, to get the whole thing moving. My London visits over and my saddlebags filled again, I would start back for Wingfield with a sense of expectant happiness, opening up the bike on the deserted roads to glorious bursts of speed, and then slowing down through the village and purring up to the racecourse gates as if I were coming home. Hearing the engine, the refugees would gather inside the gate and surround me as I got off stiffly, some of them still pushing forward with unbearable anxiety, others pushing for the sake of it, and a small number smiling unconcernedly or calling out laughingly, "Can I drive to London?" or "I'm a special case."

One of the refugees, an Austrian engineer called Stoessel, had made himself the mechanic in charge of the bike, and he took it over from me, as I got off, to give it a little loving care, as a groom takes away a horse. If ever a man had been victimized by an administrative bungle, it was Stoessel — plump, gentle, and uncomplaining. He was an

engineer of a high order and had been working on Rolls-Royce airplane engines when war broke out. Because of his skill and certain inventions that he had sent to the Admiralty, a special stamp had been put into his passport stating "Essential to the War Effort," a tribute that was his undoing. The police, swooping down on him in a Derbyshire village on that fateful day, had been so determined to take care of clever Germans who might be agents in disguise that they had arrested not only him but also his wife, sending her down for safe-keeping to Wandsworth Gaol. And now his papers were lost and he had become the guardian of my motor bike.

Baumgart, prissy but competent, would unload the papers from my saddlebags, and a crowd would follow us to the stable. Inevitably, when I got there, I would find that half a dozen notes had been stuffed into my pockets. I got used to it. We would settle down to work: our first solid list of emigrants was taking shape; a ship on which I had been allotted sixty places would be sailing in a week. The wrangling for places was already in full spate.

There were other problems too. The government, fulfilling its promise to Parliament, had announced certain categories of immediate release. Some of the refugees were leaving Wingfield, others were arriving, and the other racecourses were being combed for emigrants. The commandant complained that this state of uncertainty interfered with camp discipline. The refugees complained that the food was uneatable. Added to these were the fights within the camp itself. In one stable there was a huge map of the Lowlands and France, and bitter arguments took place there on Nazi strategy and Allied tactics. Under the grandstand, the Orthodox Jews among the refugees had set up a synagogue; opposite, as if to annoy them, a group of Marxists led by Kettner, the famous German socialist, had got hold of a typewriter and was putting out a camp newspaper.

The routine of prison life had, in other words, taken hold, though I hardly understood at first into what a marvelous historical pattern these things arranged themselves. But I was soon to learn. With the first bus load almost prepared, I was sitting one day in my stable working on the papers with great intensity, oblivious of the fact that the lunch hour had come and gone, when a young boy, neatly dressed in a white coat, arrived at my door bearing a note in a stiff white envelope. The note paper, equally impressive, carried a simple message: "Mr. Rado Kindler and his associates will be happy if you will take lunch with them today." It was clearly not an invitation but a command.

I accompanied the young man across the com-

pound to a room in the bowels of the grandstand, where I found a dark, slim, and very well-dressed man of about thirty-five waiting to receive me, with the exact air of a *maître d'hôtel*. This, in fact, was what he was. The task he had been given in the camp, presumably by choice, was to organize the feeding arrangements. When the public bout was over, he and a select few retired to this quiet little room behind the kitchen, where lunch was served to them, in a style appropriate to their station, by some of his menials. It was perhaps a simple lunch that they put before me: some *pâté*, a steak, strawberries and cream. The *vin* was *ordinaire*, but the brandy and cigars were rather fine. Then the others discreetly retired, and I was left alone with the radiant Mr. Kindler.

He brushed aside my questions with an elegant wave of the hand. "One has to organize oneself," he said carelessly. "But I wonder if I might ask for your advice. You see, I have three ways of securing my release and am not sure which will be the swiftest or the best for me. I could claim release on medical grounds immediately. I have several doctors' certificates. But I am also pursuing release for emigration, and if I get released on medical grounds first, this might affect my American visa, don't you think? The other way is to claim release under the category of running a business essential for the war effort. I could arrange this quite easily, since I have a factory which makes protective head covering."

"Protective head covering?" I asked. "Steel helmets?"

He smiled. "I will have to see what contracts I get."

"But your factory?"

"I have thirty girls making hats in Bond Street. I would switch them over and expand. That is no problem. No, the only problem is which form of release to claim. You may say, claim all. But the medical claim is a bit tricky for the American visa, and if I am released to run the factory, will the British authorities hold back my exit visa? It is not an easy problem, you will agree?"

"It's one you will have to solve yourself," I said. "I haven't seen your name so far on the visa list."

"Oh, Baumgart will see to that," he said confidently. "Please don't trouble yourself with the details. You work too hard. Work of this kind should be left to others. Some of us have more important things to do. You must go? So happy to have had the pleasure of your company. I hope you will allow me to offer you lunch again soon."

Kindler had a good effect on me. Instead of rushing back to my stable, I slowed down a bit and wandered around the passages under the grandstand. I thought that I might have a chat, perhaps, with Kettner, but there was no one there

when I looked into the camp newspaper room. From the room opposite, though, I heard voices, and I pushed open the door. There were six or seven men inside, all wearing caps, sitting in a half circle around a heavily bearded figure, Rabbi Weissbrot, a famous scholar whom I had already met over the problem of his visa. They nodded to me but took very little notice otherwise, and I sat down at the back to listen. The room, which was furnished in shiny mahogany, with photographs of race horses everywhere, looked out directly on the course, glowing in the afternoon sun.

The rabbi was reading and expounding an old commentary — the *Midrash*, it is called — on the Book of Lamentations. Whether he had selected this book deliberately or was using it because it happened to be on hand I could not, of course, tell, but there was a marvelous appropriateness in it. The Book of Lamentations is Jeremiah's elegy on the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Later, when Palestine was overrun by the Romans and the Second Temple was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D., the rabbis of the time — the authors of the *Midrash* — turned back to Jeremiah's elegy and read a thousand prophecies in it about what they were actually going through six hundred years later. The parallels lay not merely in the suffering they experienced, which seemed to be foreshadowed in Lamentations, but in the preoccupation they had, as Jeremiah had, with the mind of a Providence that allotted them this fate; and so timeless is Jewish history that for Rabbi Weissbrot and his group everything that they were reading seemed just as applicable to the world of Hitler and Wingfield. With no sense of anger or complaint, they were seeking to understand God's purpose in all that had happened to them — and not merely to them, but to their ancestors. If they could understand God's purpose, they could identify themselves with it. Human history was an endless story with only one clear clue to hold on to and pursue, the role of the Jews. The Jews had a special role in God's Providence. They were, in fact, a special case.

I wandered back to my stable. There was a telephone message from the head of the refugee organization at Holborn House. They had heard from Sir Gordon Tyrell's office that the first bus would be sent down the next day to take the fifty most likely visa candidates to London. We were on our way.

THE next three weeks were a fantastic medley of coming and going. In general, everyone was being helpful. The Americans were leaning over backwards in the granting of visas wherever their

rules on guarantors could somehow be met. Tyrell was waving aside every regulation of Whitehall whenever I turned to him to cut some red tape. Behind us, Holborn House was a massive bulwark in absorbing the pressure from wives, children, friends, and relatives. Even Goering was helping us by keeping air raids to a reasonable level, or at least by staging them according to a timetable that didn't get in our way too much.

The first group of refugees was herded onto a train at Euston one dark night and disappeared north into the blackout, toward their boat at Liverpool, with an air of triumph that made it seem like the Exodus from Egypt. One wondered vaguely what they would make of their Promised Land. If the Bible was any guide, there would be a good deal of murmuring in the wilderness, and the Promised Land itself might not be quite so golden as they thought. Perhaps one day they would look back, not exactly to the fleshpots of England, but at least to some of its virtues. But, for the moment, life had only one purpose for them — to get out. They had had enough of Europe. America was a land of peace and plenty. They would start a new life, until Nebuchadnezzar or Titus appeared again.

There was no time to organize this exodus with any ease or exactness. It was not only the children of Israel who were after me to get things moving. Pharaoh himself, in the form of Sir Gordon Tyrell, had sent for me one day to tell me that whatever could be done should be done quickly, as transport was getting increasingly scarce. The Nazi submarines were taking their toll, lying in wait on the eastern run across the Atlantic for the ships heavily laden with food and war supplies from America. The whole refugee operation might have to end very soon.

Without being told, those who were at Wingfield seemed to know this, and the intrigues to get on the lists — first for the daily run to London to go to the consulate, and then, more difficult by far, to get a berth on a ship — grew more intense. Try as we did to convey the feeling that there was no favoritism and that everything done in the stables was handled strictly according to the studbook, there was a constant murmuring, and every day found personal letters of complaint for me or notes stuffed into my pocket. Baumgart was a tower of strength through all this struggle. He deliberately kept himself off the lists, and his calm Teutonic efficiency was probably more convincing than my fairly obvious flexibility and sentimentality. But even Baumgart had his soft spot. He asked me privately one day if we could do something for one of the helpers in the office, a man called Sommetzski, whose father was already in America and very ill with cancer. I had seen

Sommetzski around. He was a dumb-looking creature, generating a feeling of mute helplessness. From what Baumgart told me, I realized that he was one of those people for whom things always went wrong. He had had a visa sent to him in Germany, but it had arrived after he left and expired before he could use it. Another visa was on its way when his guarantor suddenly died. He had arranged everything and secured a passage from England just before the war, when his small child had caught measles. Baumgart was trying hard to help him, but somehow it was impossible to push him forward.

My own favorite was Stoessel. His wife was still in Wandsworth Gaol; the authorities had not yet produced the information on his special work that would release him, and he was therefore relying on his emigration release. In the meantime, he went about his work smilingly and without complaint, polishing my motor bike until every part gleamed like silver and never asking for any kind of special attention. I was quite delighted one day when, looking through the lists, I saw that his visa was finally due to be granted and that his priority had given him and his wife berths on the next ship. When I told him about the berths, he glowed with relief.

I went across to see Baumgart and found him talking to Sommetzski, who was sitting on a chair with a look of abject misery on his face. Baumgart took me aside to tell me that a cable had just come in from the refugee organization in New York advising that Sommetzski's father was desperately ill and could not last long. Sommetzski's priority would not entitle him to go on the next ship, and we had no idea when there would be another one. Was there anyone whom we could ask to surrender his place?

I thought I knew who would and went to find Stoessel. I explained that if he gave up his berths in favor of the Sommetzskis, there was no guarantee that we could get him off later. He smiled in his soft Austrian way. "Of course I'll stand down," he said. "If you can get my wife out of jail without the emigration, that will be enough. We will wait. I will go back to work if they will give me the permit. Let Sommetzski go." Later in the day I saw Sommetzski talking to Stoessel, or rather just looking at him in dumb gratitude.

**I** THOUGHT that all was now well. I should have known better. Fate does not let go of its hapless ones so easily.

At first it was just the feeling that our luck was turning. For one thing, Goering had become unreasonable again, and it was becoming extremely



awkward to get around London because of the constant alerts and the holes in the roads that forced traffic into elaborate detours. Assembling the party at Holborn House for what might be our last shipment proved unusually difficult. There was an increasing fractiousness in the air.

The train was to leave Euston for Glasgow at 5:30 that evening, with the ship due to sail in the early hours of the next morning. There had been a constant procession of the emigrants all day through Holborn House. At 4:00 I was sitting in the room of one of the directors, drinking a cup of tea and edging carefully into a final sense of relief, when the news I had half been waiting for reached us. An agitated secretary burst in. "Sommetski!" she wailed. "He and his wife! They're outside with their child. They've lost their papers. Left them on the bus."

We rushed out into the main hall. Mrs. Sommetski had fainted and was lying on the floor, where they were trying to revive her. The child was whimpering. Sommetski stood there, wringing his hands in a terrible unending movement of despair.

"I had all the papers in a little bag," he said. "Our passports, visas, ship tickets, everything. We were in the bus coming here from the Marble Arch. I was holding the bag very tight not to lose it. And when we got here, I didn't have it. I must have left it in the bus. And now all is lost." He twisted his hands. Mrs. Sommetski had been revived and was sobbing in a chair.

We tried to pin him down to the facts. It had been a Number 25 bus, he thought. But the 25 bus going east along Oxford Street went on for about six miles further to Bow or Stratford. Normally it was a straight road; one might chase the bus. But with the bombing, bus routes were completely unpredictable. How could one know which bus it was? — if, indeed, it had been a 25 bus at all. And it was now 4:15.

Everyone was pushing questions at Sommetski, and I heard one of the secretaries ask him whether it could have been a 25-A bus and not a 25. She explained to me that the 25-A didn't go all the way to Bow but turned off to a terminus near Islington. There was no way of checking with Sommetski, and with the service so disrupted there was no point in trying to telephone. But the 25-A was the only chance. I ran out of the room and jumped on my motor bike, roaring down the street with a wild sense of excitement, swooping in and out of the obstructions and aiming as best I knew toward Islington. Once past King's Cross, I had to stop to ask the way, but ultimately I found the terminal and drove in.

The yard was empty. It was quiet and peaceful after the bustle and confusion outside. I hitched

my bike onto its stand and ran across to the little office. No one was in a hurry inside the office, and when I finally got hold of the duty clerk, he was quite unruffled at my anxiety. Yes, he told me, the 25-A did come into this terminal. There was one just coming in. I looked through the window and saw the great heart-warming red bus purr slowly through the narrow gate and come throb-bingly to rest. The driver got down from his perch in front and stretched himself. The conductor was still on the bus, fiddling with the indicators; then he, too, left it and strolled across to the office, carrying the usual packages of tickets and money.

"Gentleman here asking if anything was left on the bus, Alf," said the clerk to him.

"Just one thing," said Alf, producing a little brown bag. My heart began to pound.

"This might be it, eh?" said the clerk to me, opening it and looking inside. "Can you describe the contents?"

I tried to speak calmly. "Two passports, name of Sommetski. A big paper with an American stamp on it, same name. And a ship ticket."

He took the things out and put them on the desk. There they were, the product of years of waiting, centuries of despair. There was a little purse there, too, with two pounds inside. And there were some photographs of a small child.

He put the things back and handed the bag to me. "Just sign for it," he said.

"Is there anything to pay?" I managed to ask.

"Oh, yes," he said. "We always make a charge, depending on the value. Nothing valuable here, I see. Suppose we say two shillings."

The bike seemed to sing as I roared back to Holborn House. When I came into the hall, Sommetski and his wife were pacing up and down, whispering together in a restless agony. I held out the bag. Mrs. Sommetski went white and fainted away again. Sommetski came toward me tremblingly. It was five o'clock. We gathered them together and rushed them off to Euston.

WITH the last ship gone, I thought I had better find out what was in the official mind about winding up the camp, and I went over the next morning to see Tyrell.

The office of the lord lieutenant, an ancient sinecure, was in a gracious eighteenth-century house off St. James's. One wondered what went on there, apart from special operations that were thrust on it, like the internment of enemy aliens. Tyrell, graceful and unregimented, suited the mood of the house perfectly.

He was apparently quite pleased with the way things had gone, and not displeased with my own

part. "You speak German quite well, don't you?" he remarked casually. "Do you think you could pass as a German?"

A hundred pictures flashed through my mind, including one of a neat little firing party dealing with an agent in civilian clothes. "Oh, God, no!" I said. "I'm fluent, but I have a terrible accent."

"Ah, well," he murmured. "We'll think of something else for you. Tell me about Rado Kindler. He's down at Wingfield. Do you know him?"

My eyes popped a little. "Oh, yes, I know him," I said. "Very good taste in brandy."

"Yes, so I gather," said Tyrell. "Pretty astute, you'd say?"

I agreed that astute was the word.

"We may use him," Tyrell said. "Some talk about his going out to South America."

So many things were being left unsaid that I hesitated to pursue the subject. I assumed that something like a double agent's role was in mind for him. The part suited him, if one could only be sure. But wasn't that the way with double agents? They had to give just this air of being untrustworthy in order to generate the feeling that they could be bought. And suddenly I began to wonder. The lunch. Had this been his way of testing me? Rather a sweet thought.

Tyrell had remembered something. "We've one more ship for you," he said. "A Norwegian ship escaped last week and is sailing for New York in two or three days. I've just sent you a message about it. Lots of cabin space. You can have seventy berths."

THIS time, Stoessel would go. I was determined. I phoned down to Baumgart immediately to tell him about the ship and asked him to make quite sure that Stoessel's papers would be processed in time. I got in touch with the governor of Wandsworth Gaol to notify him that Mrs. Stoessel was to be released for emigration. I sent a message to the American Consul saying that I could personally recommend Stoessel for a visa, that he was an exceptionally pleasant person who deserved a break, that he was, in fact, a special case.

The provision of this unexpected ship with seventy berths seemed like a miracle to the refugees, and everything went with a swing. Messages and paper flashed back and forth, and when the day for departure arrived and the whole troop was assembled in Holborn House for a final checking of documents, the atmosphere was one of holiday. The Wingfield contingent had been brought up by bus, wives and children had come in from all over the place, and, greatest joy of all,

Mrs. Stoessel had been brought up by a warder from Wandsworth and reunited with her husband.

I went with them to Euston. There was an alert on, and occasional bangs. But Stoessel stood outside the station with me to take a last look at London.

"I didn't want to go," he told me. "I would have liked to stay. They shouldn't have put my wife in prison. It was a mistake, I know; but I can't stay here now. I wish I could."

We shook hands and I wandered away. I'd had enough too. I walked down Southampton Row to Holborn House to pick up my motor bike, thinking rather sadly, as I caught sight of it waiting for me outside the office, that I should have to give it back now to the army. The excitement was over. The war stretched ahead, gray and endless.

Perhaps I should have a last talk with Tyrell. I got on the bike and roared the engine a bit driving to St. James's. Parking near the Ritz, and realizing that it was lunchtime, I suddenly felt the desire to indulge myself for once. The carpets, the soft lights, the obsequious waiters were balm to the soul. I sat down in the Grill Room, and there across the floor was Kindler, lunching with another man as elegant as himself and two beautiful women.

He saw me at the same moment and came across immediately, delighted, it seemed, at the encounter. "So much pleasanter than Wingfield," he said. "I breathe again."

"How do you happen to be in London?" I asked him.

"Oh, I got permission to come up and see my dentist," he said airily. "They gave me a special guard. There he is, outside." Sure enough, a Tommy from the camp was sitting waiting in the hall.

"And what have you decided about release?" I asked.

"Well, I'm not quite sure," he said, cocking his head a little to one side as if weighing the whole thing. "I think I may be opening an arms factory, making automatic rifles. I'm just discussing it now." He waved his hand toward his table, where his companions sat drinking champagne.

"Oh, then you've decided to stay in England?"

"No," he said. "Not in England. I think I shall be going abroad. More interesting, you know."

"Abroad? Perhaps South America?"

There was a slight twinkle in his eye. "Perhaps. Perhaps. There are so many interesting things to do. One has to organize things, don't you think? And now you *must* join us for lunch. I insist. You take things too seriously. You need a change."

I joined them. He was right. I needed a change.

# *The Love Letter*

BY FREDERICK SEIDEL

Suddenly his lungs  
and the two soiled pillows that he'd hugged to him  
forced him up through black ice to the surface  
where his body had found the way.  
Those smoked-out pockets of bad breath  
woke him, gasping, flexing, from a wet dream  
into Atlantis and street lights just after dawn.

His wife rolled over and over  
in the eddies of lighter sleep,  
one large breast floating free.  
He covered her, had a cold bath  
after shaving his stiff jaws purple and soft,  
and having breakfasted, shouldered the flat mailbag —  
for this was the mailman —  
and hunchbacked, jackknifed like a diver, he went off.  
A day like any other.

The dawn was a screeching fingernail of light  
he heard and the dogs heard. The day would be  
a crisscross of streets like electroshock —  
streets, one on top of another, that didn't come out right,  
unfolding like a carpenter's rule, a foot at a time,  
or hovered like Chinese bridges over moon mists of snow,  
floating between their street lamps' nearsighted halos.

The sky was an oyster shell seen from inside,  
silvery and silver-polish-gray and pink rinses of nylon  
brought out by the crack of light.  
The world was his oyster, clenched, clammy, and gray.

And all this while, a thousand miles away,  
at the end of a rope  
either end of which frayed into dismal streets  
the girl idled in the blond and syrupy doldrums of her sleep.  
Sleep curled around her  
like the mouth around a child's finger. . .



while her Levy, the other man in her life,  
a thousand miles away from her, was waking.  
— Had he come in from the snow to this warm, dim hallway?  
A muffled telephone from somewhere went ringing  
with the heat through his ears and fingers —  
but was it his? He'd never reach it, so he paused,  
and drowsing right there, dreamed in his dream  
he'd rush into his room in time  
only to hear the telephone, far off, still bleating.  
He was in the hall, the phone rang on and on.  
Then he woke up, he dreamed, and there was the mailman  
already hours at work.

If now he *was* awake, he'd had no sleep.  
Tired or scared, wide-eyed like a widower  
or a man back from his second honeymoon  
stretched out in his half of the double bed,  
his thoughts were elsewhere or nowhere. . . .

Oh Michael, Oh lover —  
If only the letter would come and tell her,  
“Despite all, when you're away I want you here.”  
He had approached her in her dream,  
and her nipples had risen to greet him,  
her eyes, behind their closed lids  
swiveling with her breasts, had bloomed for the asking.  
The circuited clouds of her brain had drawn lightning  
from the road fork's fountain, burning the grass there a darker green.  
And when the star burst, it was cream blossoming  
in the bitterest coffee, light was ebbing  
into nothingness but not vanishing fast enough  
to go out, a man on fire outrunning his flames  
to death and becoming his own mellowed darkness.  
It was another atmosphere, nothing could be airier,  
more bemused — only this death's twin death  
could be less feminine.  
She had become almost no one. . . .

But there *was* something.  
Levy, behind the back of his hand, looked again.  
Something outside seemed to be growing forward.  
Like a god who pours into the shape of his motion,  
this was overtaking the sidewalk's dreamless walk  
across his window's quiet snowblind focus,

a milky half-moon of plasma, either a god or a ghost,  
and even the spitz next door just whined and dawdled  
and nosed the ground, circling behind on its three legs.  
He looked again.

Past where the snowy tree ramified  
like the lungs' capillaries in a negative,  
past the gutter's underworld silence and steam,  
he saw the eye sockets and the cap, the buttons  
and a uniform, all gray — fat hips,  
and shoes like mastiffs to keep the slushy miles off,  
the rat weather, the gray dawn.  
It was the mailman, talking to himself.

— Millions of him, and each talks to himself,  
and when a blue twig prickles an icy March window,  
who'll jaw about spring with a mailman,  
with relatives dying? Michael was thinking —

when he remembered. Then he remembered,  
he dashed out, his alarm clock still in another world.  
His shirt flapped like a gull, his eyes were streaming.  
He had the letter in his hand.

Both were breathing hard,  
the barely smiling mailman,  
and the Jew,  
barely out of the wandering hallway,  
and already caressing his lips with thoughtful fingers.

Their white breaths scuffled like fists,  
blow for blow, as if to say:  
"I try to get out. I dream. I soar from the deck,  
knees locked — a Hart Crane, a heart thrown in the sea.  
But my witnesses haven't even seen me."

The mailman took the letter —  
only at each step, under his broad chest  
his lungs, as under a sidewalk, shook  
like an unrecovered bomb, menacing everyone.

The boy went back to sleep.  
The girl was a thousand miles away.

# Just how far should government go in competing with its own citizens?

*Today the government runs some 19,000  
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in its civilian branches alone!*

Many thoughtful people are surprised to learn that the U. S. government actively competes with thousands of independent businesses, large and small.

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**BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH SCHOLARSHIPS** — Bread Loaf School of English of Middlebury College, Vermont, announces the award of two scholarships covering tuition for the 1960 session of Bread Loaf School of English: one to Linda Tanner, Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri (for her story, "J'ai Ma Croix"), and one to her instructor, Jack D. LaZebnik.

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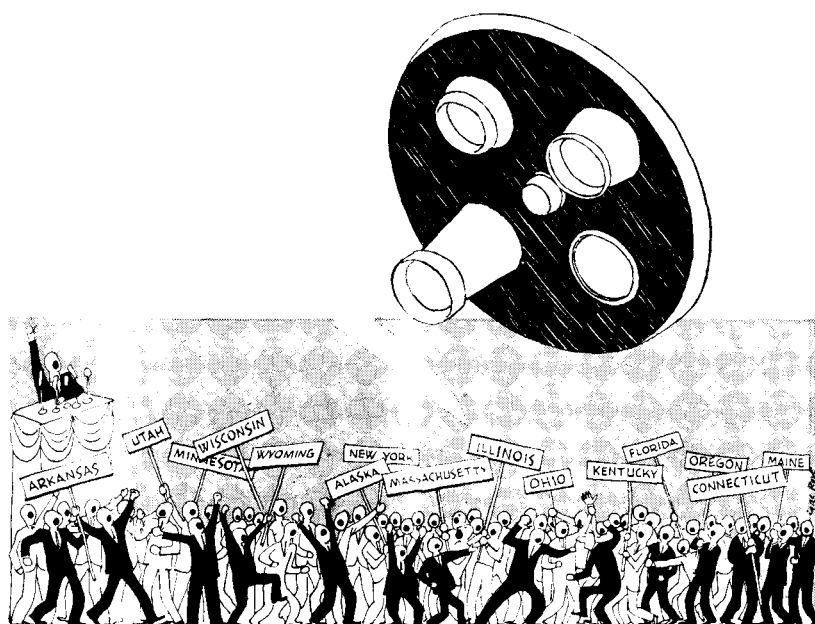
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**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOLARSHIP** — The University of Pittsburgh awards a four-year scholarship (free tuition) to Robert Gates, Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire, for his story "Rebuilding the Wall."

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# Accent on

VIDEO tape is really much better than live TV. It speeds everything up; never a dull moment. If a joke falls flat, go back and can it and put in a better one. No harm in adding some heartier laughter, while we're about it. "Parts of this program were prerecorded on video tape," says the announcer triumphantly. He doesn't say which parts, but we happen to know that one of the early-morning interviews we have just been following actually took place one afternoon week before last. One gets the impression that TV people are still a bit diffident about owning up to tape. Only recently they would manage a kind of muttering version of "By transcription" or "Parts of this program were transcribed," but now they speak right up about it, clearly, in affirmative tones.

Television has learned how to boil down sports events to a point of eliminating those tedious intervals where nothing much is happening. "They halved the fourteenth and fifteenth, and we now pick them up all even, teeing off on number sixteen," comes the awe-struck, whispering voice of the announcer, "here at the beautiful Nirvana Heights Country Club," etc. Golf, by this method, is a succession of holed-out approaches, birdies, and unimaginable

recoveries. If Doakes seems to be in real trouble, just watch him lip the cup with this sixty-footer!

Edited football ran throughout the winter on a one-hour basis, simply by cutting out most of the small-yardage plays. "Neither side was able to threaten during the rest of the quarter," the announcer explains, "in an exchange of punts and a series of plays that failed to gain ground." So, rejoining the action once again, we are rewarded by slam-bang bucking, running, and passing and a high-scoring second quarter that puts the Wingding Panthers out in front 21 to 6. That "6" instead of a "7" gives the announcer a chance to explain how all-important a single point can become, for Wingding's opponents, under such circumstances in professional football, usually show a complete reversal of form in the second half and either win the game or come within a whisker of doing so. Regardless of the outcome, it's the showy stuff, the pivotal plays that TV preserves for us, from all sorts of games, in edited sports. The unfunny gag is out, and so are those parts of interviews, baseball games, and panel discussions that don't pay off.

The lessons here, for the political conventions this summer, are obvi-

ous: get started right away on prerecording them on video tape while there is still time for editing and retakes. A show lasting perhaps ninety minutes would be the idea, a Presidential Spectacular — action-packed, sparkling, thrill-jammed political horse trading and logrolling.

Prerecording can show all the delegates as relatively interesting, even attractive, human beings, reasonably well behaved. I still recall the two platform occupants of 1952 shown on a live program, one of whom, during the opening prayer of the session, produced a nail file and busied himself with it, while the other, head reverently bowed, was seen to be lighting a big cigar. Others were disclosed to the TV audience, as the camera shopped about the hall, in various acts of social undress, hard at it with toothpicks, or scratching themselves, or, more often, sleeping quietly in their chairs.

The ninety-minute Presidential Spectacular will omit a great deal more, naturally, than small lapses of deportment. Whole platoons of senators will be combined and paraphrased in a sentence or two, although each party will preserve one or two for comic relief — Dirksen and Mundt, for instance, and Kefauver and Talmadge. The first verse

of the national anthem will be sung by Connie Francis or Elvis Presley (fifty-five seconds, including ten seconds of applause). Dozens of native sons will blush unseen and unheard, and so, alas, will those who put them in nomination.

"The next five hours," the announcer will say, as he disposes of them in a few seconds, "yielded

nothing of network caliber. So, after a brief word from our sponsors, we shall return to the convention floor and show you how the delegates received Bob Hope's hilarious story, 'Days and Nights in the Smoke-filled Room.' I think you'll agree with me that they loved it!"

Those interminable roll calls will be briskly capsuled. Snake dances,

victory marches, and spontaneous ovations may be held only by written permission of the sponsor and in no case for more than thirty seconds per candidate. Even so, an hour and a half is quite a long show. With capable trimming, it ought to be possible to wrap it all up in one hour flat.

CHARLES W. MORTON

## The Ultimate Fi

BY J. G. MITCHELL

J. G. MITCHELL is a librarian in the British Columbia Provincial Library of Victoria. This is his first appearance in the pages of the ATLANTIC.

Jason was unhappy. He knew as he listened to the four speaker systems in front of him and the two on each side of him and the three behind him that with his present components he could not hope to produce really, really high fidelity sound in his listening room. He could no longer shrug off the fact that his matched superrealistic multidirectional magnastereophonic reproduction system could not honestly be said to be giving him the truly faithful concert-hall realism he had read about in advertisements.

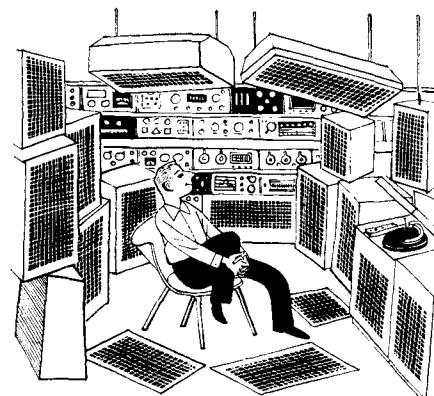
He tried to make peace with himself. He fought back the growing ache that pulsed from the region of his liver, a familiar pain that had immediately preceded each previous expansion of his electronic equipment. He tried to make peace with his yearning and his liver. But bicarbonate and old records are a poor balm for the aching spirit and the discontented ear of the chronic audiophile.

Still, he took down from the sterilized, dustproof shelves and removed from its six plastic envelopes and put on the turntable the famous — justly so, in view of the relatively primitive fifteen-track recording process available when it had been made — the famous record of the Indianapolis motor race of 1967. And for a time the sound of the cars ricocheting around and around the room was sufficiently and agonizingly realistic to temper his discontent.

Only for a time. Even with super-realistic multidirectional magna-

stereophonic reproduction one could not go on interminably listening to recordings of automobile races. And, although the roaring illusion of the Indianapolis track could be sustained by sound emanating merely from all four walls of a room, from speakers all around the listener, the full, spatial richness of a symphony orchestra could never be brought faithfully into the listening room by wall speakers alone. Audio experts in all the magazines emphasized the absurdity of expecting high fidelity sound from speakers merely on the four walls of a room. Did Jason, they asked in advertisement after advertisement, deliberately shut out any of the glorious sound waves at a live concert by sitting in cotton batting and by wearing a down-filled sound absorber for a hat?

To achieve genuine concert-hall realism, Jason knew that he would have to convert to the new extra-dimensional system. He knew that to approach the final fidelity, to experience the moment of electronic truth, he would have to install additional speakers in the floor and the ceiling, and worse — although he was growing accustomed to doing it — would have to scrap his present collection of discs in favor of the new seventeen-track records that were beginning to appear in the shops. It would be expensive, but, oh, it would be worth the outlay to hear the *1812 Overture* sounding as Tchaikovsky had meant it to sound (or



would have meant it to sound if he could have envisioned an orchestra of three hundred players and four combined brass bands all jammed into Jason's listening room, together with the bell towers of the Kremlin, Riverside Church, the Ottawa Peace Tower, Big Ben, and the Little Church Around the Corner, and, in addition, the sound of five honest-to-goodness nuclear explosions, used in the finale in place of the more common naval barrages laid down in earlier recording sessions). It should be stunning, he knew — the sound pouring over him not only from sources in front of him, behind him, and on all sides of him, but also from above and beneath him, as in a concert hall, beamed down on him from the ceiling and up at him through the broadloom.

Through the broadloom. Well, the drapes had gone, and the overstuffed furniture; now it had to be the rug. Perched on a scientifically

## PUBLIC ADDRESSES: Memorial Day

BY ROBERT BERKOWITZ

The loudly speaking speakers praise them,  
Indignant, bleating, full of blames;  
And I, who knew them, remember only  
The broken music of their names.



designed, square, highly polished, sound-refracting Klapschinged stool in the very center of his barren listening room, in order to not have anything aurally harmful between himself and his reproduced music, Jason felt an honest regret at the thought of parting with the rug. It was the final link with his old way of life — his wife having gone with the last-but-one conversion — but part with it he knew he must. Sentiment, he admitted, had never done much for a room's acoustics.

Jason broke the Indianapolis Speedway over his knee — records once again being made breakable to facilitate the inevitable change-over from improved system to improved system — and he started off to arrange the terms for purchasing his new components.

When he was halfway to the supply house, a dreadful thought stole into Jason's consciousness: what if the total complement of seventeen matched speaker systems, seventeen amplifiers, seventeen preamplifiers, and seventeen post-preamplifiers; the nonrumbling, nonwowing, non-fluttering, synchromatic, infinitely adjustable turntable; the quadruple viscous-damped, superlight, ball-bearing-balanced, straight-grained nonresonating tulip-wood tone arm; the platinum-plated cartridge with the four and a half diamond styluses — what if all of this magnificent assemblage still would not turn the listening room into Philharmonic Hall?

"Ridiculous," Jason said out loud. It would *have* to turn his fourteen by twenty-two foot listening room into Philharmonic Hall. With sound pouring out from all four walls, the ceiling, and the floor, there was no further improvement that could be made; the dimensions were used up. It *had* to give him the ultimate in sound. He left a \$1500 down payment with Harmony House Sound Systems, Ltd., on the two new amplifiers, preamplifiers, post-preamplifiers, speaker systems, cartridges, and the album of the *1812 Overture* recorded at the Los Alamos proving grounds.

It took only four weeks for his listening room to be reconstructed. When all the additional components were in place, Jason stood — the stool had had to go, too — to hear Tchaikovsky. It was overwhelming, quite overwhelming. Jason was happy at last.

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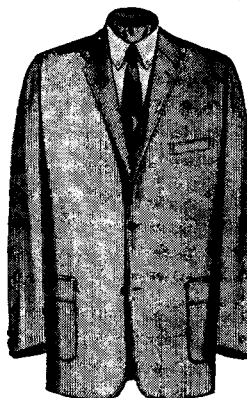
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by Charles A. Kerner

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## The Neurotic's Notebook



MIGNON McLAUGHLIN

When the pressures really mount, the neurotic must choose: shall he have a good cry or set fire to his neighbor's house?



Love, like money, is offered most freely to those in least need of it.



During his moment of euphoria, the neurotic always feels — in the teeth of the evidence — that that is his normal state.



Nobody wants constructive criticism; it's all we can do to put up with constructive praise.



Women are good listeners, but it's a waste of time telling your troubles to a man unless there is something specific you want him to do.



No one can understand love who has not experienced infatuation. And no one can understand infatuation, no matter how many times he has experienced it.



My bootstraps have taken me the usual distance.



No good neurotic finds it difficult to be both opinionated and indecisive.

*Doodles courtesy of Charles W. Morton.*

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# Luxury Symbols

BY WILLIAM K. ZINSSER

WILLIAM K. ZINSSER is the former film critic of the New York HERALD TRIBUNE. This is his first appearance in the ATLANTIC.

If I were Margaret Mead — and, as it happens, I'm not — I could explain this thing in sociological terms. But in any terms it is a strange tale.

It is the story of a discovery that the Carrier Corporation stumbled on not very long ago. Carrier perfected a new air-conditioning and central heating system for the home and was very proud of the fact that the unit did its work unnoticed. Hidden in cellar or attic, it was invisible to any caller and so silent that nobody could hear it.

But sales lagged unaccountably, and Carrier was puzzled. Then one day the firm realized what the trouble was. Americans don't want a luxury appliance unless their friends can see it. It's not enough just to be comfortable, though this was once considered a pretty good end in itself. Now everybody must know that you have the money to make yourself comfortable.

Obviously something had to be done, and done fast. Carrier did something fast. It built a control panel of shiny chrome, eight by fourteen inches, or roughly the size of a watercolor, that can be set in the wall of a downstairs room, preferably the living room, in a conspicuous spot. The panel consists of various on and off buttons, a thermometer, and three dials which tell, among other things, the humidity, the barometric pressure, and the time.

To show how this instrument might fit in the décor of a modern house, Carrier sent out some publicity photographs. In one the chrome panel is embedded in a pine-paneled wall just above a bookcase, where a painting might ordinarily be. It is flanked on one side by a statue of Buddha and on the other by a leather-bound set of Anatole France.

Amid these symbols the air-conditioning panel seems perfectly at home. No more need a visitor spend a cool couple of hours in a friend's house on a hot summer night without knowing why the house is cool. In the dials and meters he can read the secret of his

host's controlled air and financial success.

Carrier was clever to cut this Gordian, or Freudian, knot. But now everybody will want to get in on the act. If the day should come, for instance, when television sets no longer need aerials, will people take the aerial down? Certainly not. It is one of our civilization's most important symbols. If aerials were to go, probably the TV industry would have to devise a plaque that could be nailed to the outside of the house to indicate that a set is inside.

But it is in the kitchen that pride of ownership is truly centered. A friend of mine, diffident about a new dishwasher, hid it behind a simple curtain. This horrified a local realtor, who urged him to replace the curtain with the standard chrome panel for dishwashers. "Then all your friends will know," he said, "that you own one additional major appliance."

My friend didn't bother, but one day he had to put the house up for rent. Then the realtor told him that the house would go for twice as much if all the major appliances were visible and the kitchen were done over in vinyl. Nowadays when people shop for a new house, they hardly look at the living room or yard or go around feeling the drapes, as was the usual custom. They go straight to the kitchen to feel the vinyl and count the major appliances. Perhaps the best solution would be to post in the front hall, where all could see it immediately, a list of every plain, major, and luxury appliance in the house, even if they are only little luxury appliances, like electric can openers.

Then only one problem would remain. How would people know how rich you are in appliances when you are away from home? I suggest a medal, a kind of merit badge, to be worn on the lapel. Perhaps it could be something like those marksmanship medals that we used to win in summer camp, the medallions from which little crossbars were hung as new grades were attained. On the medal that I propose, the little bars would say Stereo, Barbecue Pit, Color TV, Bound Volumes, and that sort of thing. If a man had enough of them, so that they swung to his waist like a rope ladder, he would obviously be a gentleman of property. This would save looking him up in Dun and Bradstreet.



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## The Seventy-Nine-Cent Spread

BY LUTHER STEWART

My relationship with the Florida supermarket has been a strained and curious one ever since my arrival from England to visit some friends who have somehow become islanded in the pine wastes of north-central Florida. With the Atlantic chill still in my bones — I had landed at Jacksonville via freighter from Liverpool — these kindly intentioned people rushed me off posthaste for supermarket orientation.

At soul, I suppose, every American, even the most post-Veblenite of university professors, sees himself surrounded by possessions, looking like an ad in the slick magazines, with a host of freckle-faced youngsters around to consume it all. In the supermarket, the foreign visitor may savor to the full this dream image Americans have of themselves, and it must have been for such a reason that I was so soon made to encounter a building roughly the same size as Westminster Abbey but which had a good deal more pretension.

My hosts bundled me toward the place across a sea of parked cars and begged that I notice how the doors opened. The doors opened, in fact, very nicely and obediently to the pressure of one's footsteps on a red carpet — really, a red carpet — leading to them. In England, of course, if you go in for this sort of thing, you employ a butler. When my hostess cried encouragingly, "Look! No hands," I was hard put to say something appropriate; after all, there is little one can profitably do with free hands, even in England, when moving through a door. Luckily, I was in good company and was not expected to shout praises like a cheerleader. I had already discovered, though, that Britishers are required to produce an occasional mumble as wonders are revealed to them, and I did so accordingly.

My eye had been taken, however, not by the doors but by the display on the first counter within. There I met up with a group of stolid tins with plain workaday labels, containing, I discovered, bees. Roasted bees. Suddenly I felt like

the woman in the cartoon who says, "I don't know what I want; I don't even know what half of these things are."

"Hi," I called, thinking to please my friends by bringing a "funny" — a word to which they seemed much addicted — to their attention. "There's been some mistake in the labeling here. Just look, it says 'bees.' Doesn't it?"

"Oh, they have lots of crazy stuff here," said my friend. "It's a great place for laughs." He proceeded to point out, down the length of the counter, grasshoppers (fried), ants (chocolate-covered), rattlesnake (*au naturel*), alligator soup, and a host of other "goodies" (their word) from the insect and reptilian realms. Now, I am not a fusty old curmudgeon who thinks that anything other than roast beef and Yorkshire pudding corrodes the gastrointestinal tract, and I was, in fact, charmed by these delicacies.

"You mean to say that people eat such things here?" I inquired.

"Well, my theory," said my friend's pretty Southern wife, in all seriousness, "is that they don't eat them exactly — I mean, most people wouldn't eat them, but they sort of



buy them for a gag and . . . mess around with them." I must confess that I have in my luggage at this moment a tiny tin of caterpillars which I plan to take back home to Nottingham with me if I can get them through customs without anyone questioning my mental health. Once safely home, I shall put them in a time capsule along with the tiny navel brush — for brushing

one's navel — that was given me as a Christmas present by a Southern coed, and my year's collection of *McCall's*. Someone has to keep records.

The supermarket had only just begun to tantalize me with its charms. As I was passing down the "aisles full of husbands," as Allen Ginsberg, the beat poet, put it fetchingly, foraging on my own past the frozen garbanzo bean soup counter, I encountered a sweet young thing, arms extended toward me beckoningly. Being unmarried and in good health, I looked about for an uncrowded vegetable bin where I could dally a moment with this charming windfall. But, as is so often true in America, her charms were for all; like the air hostesses who seem to be offering the prospects of matrimony to every passenger, she was not interested in me but in my role as consumer. I had been told before I left England that my Midlands haircut and spaniel look would make all American women want to mother me, so I gave the girl a leer. But she must have taken this as the grimace of a cretin, for she held out some oleaginous substance on a tiny biscuit for me to take.

"Would you like to try a little experiment?" she cooed.

"Anything I can do," I said.

I was immediately handed another biscuit, along with a line of patter which I refrained from interrupting for fear the girl would become unhinged; she had been wound up like a phonograph. One biscuit, she informed me, was covered with her own firm's high-grade margarine; the other formed the control group and had upon it what I was almost certain she called "the seventy-nine-cent spread." The sport came in trying to determine which was which. I am not averse to games, I must say, and I rather enjoy an occasional bout of charades if I happen to be spending the evening with otherwise dangerous sportive types, but I am also somewhat scientifically oriented and I wished to have the terms of the contest made a bit more clear.

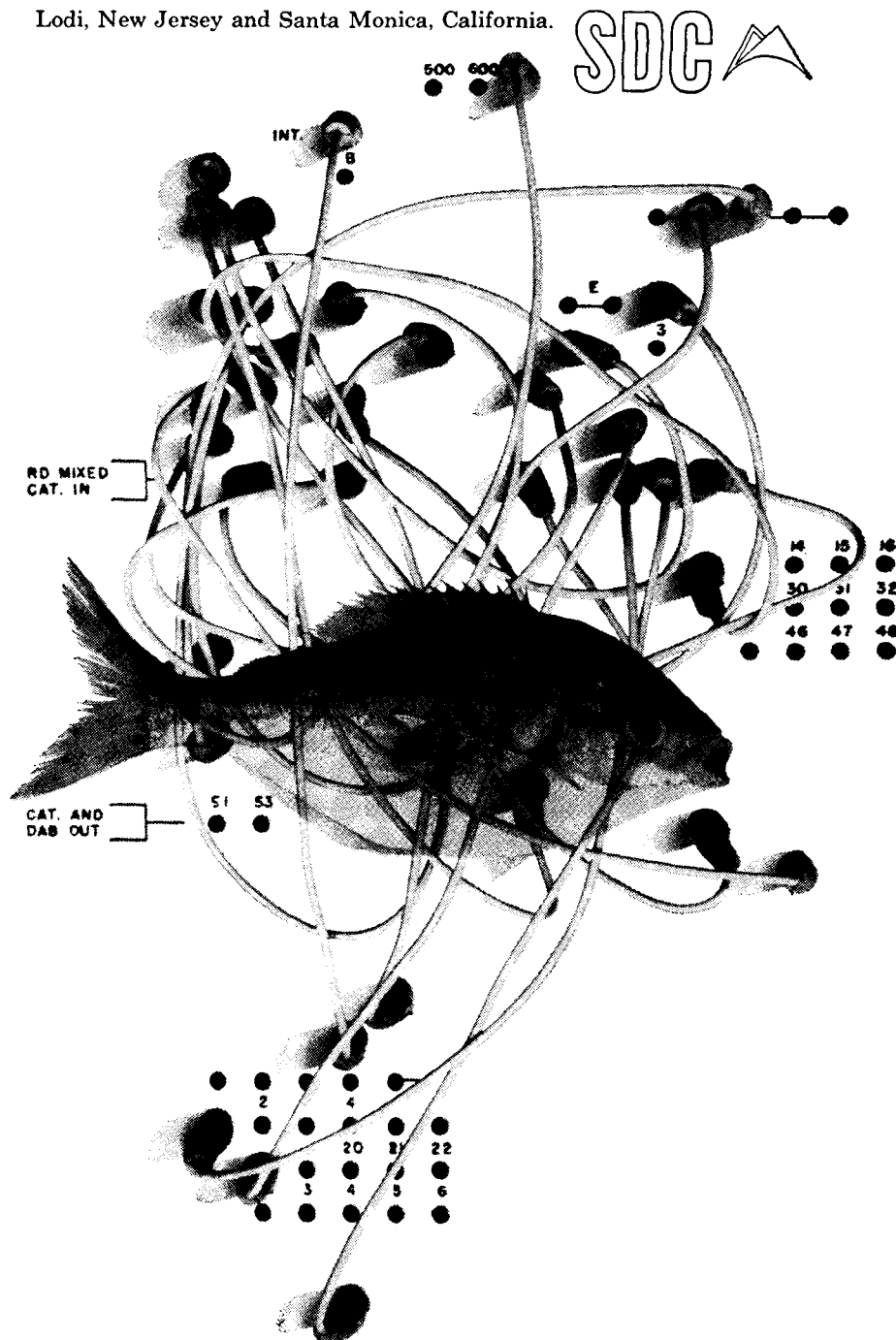
"The seventy-nine-cent spread?" I urged.

"That's right, sir," the girl replied.

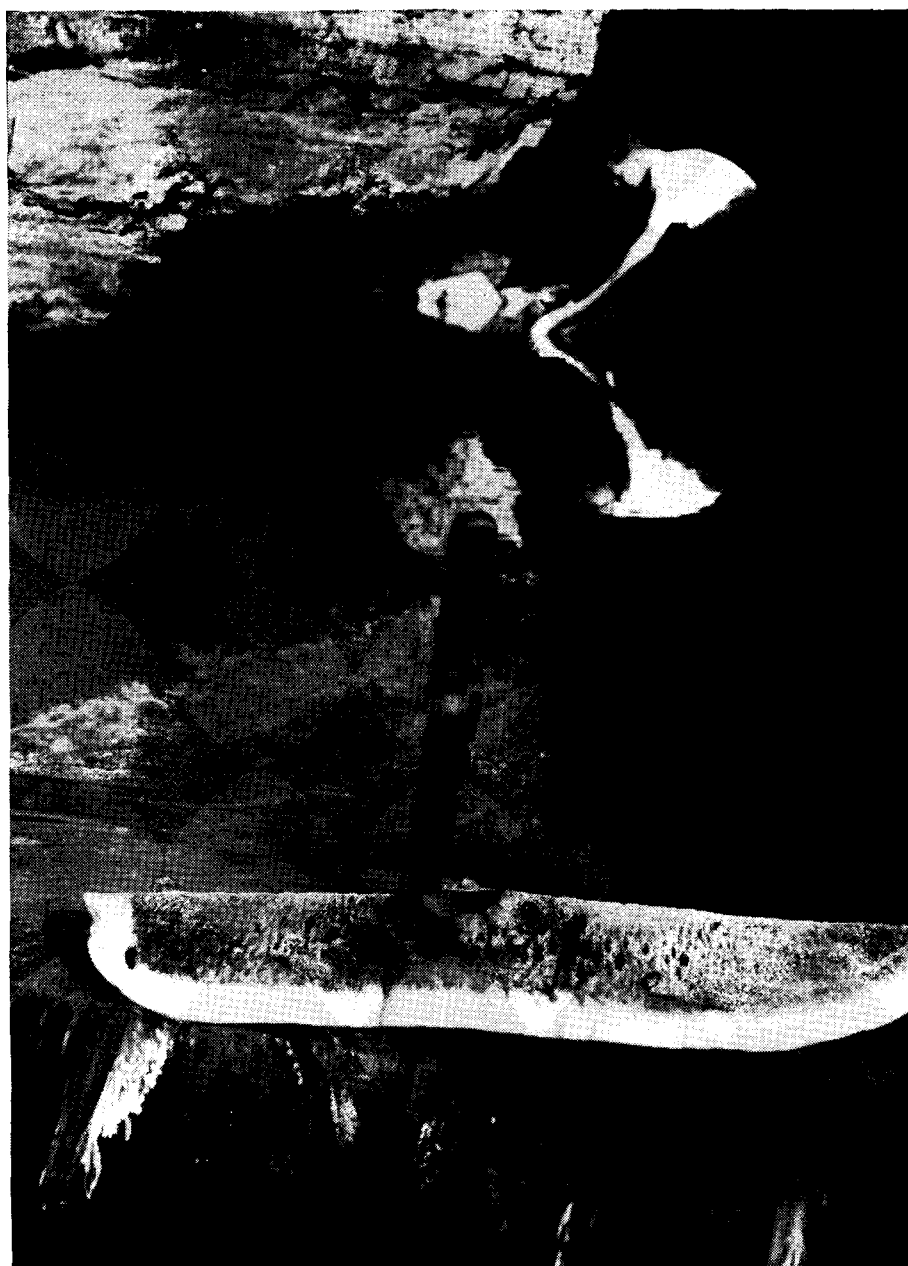
"You'll have to pardon me," I said. "I'm a foreigner. Just what is the seventy-nine-cent spread?"

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"Sorry, sir," the girl said stiffly, in very much the manner of a London bus conductress dealing with a loutish masher. "We're not permitted by federal statute to tell you."

Shaken, I tasted the two morsels. Now, in England, after the war, a Socialist stateswoman named Mrs. Edith Summerskill, who was later to cover herself with renown by visiting Egypt after the Suez withdrawal and claiming that she was a Norwegian, had, in order to further the cause of food rationing, made the claim that it was impossible to tell the difference between margarine and butter. She was sharply proved wrong. Anyone without false dentures and with any sort of palate worth speaking of had no difficulty in this sort of discrimination.

Perceiving straightaway that the seventy-nine-cent spread was butter, I told the girl so and asked her to pass the information back to her firm. The other stuff, I explained, was some artificial concoction made to look and taste like butter, but was better left alone. The girl gazed at me in a sort of fury, and I realized that she had discovered through this experience the presence of evil in the universe and could not wait to get home to write a story about it.

I ducked behind a Coke machine and so made my escape, and then found my friends trying to decide whether to buy a packet of corn chips called Fritos under the pressure of an irresistible inducement. That week, with the purchase of one package of chips, one got free a tin of bean dip and a bird. The bird was a paper one which could be whirled around at the end of a long stick, but the noise it made as it looped and curved, along with thousands of its brethren, was enough to make anyone go mad about corn chips. I told them my experience with the butter.

"They know the other stuff is butter," said my friend, hefting a fifty-pound metal pail of washing machine detergent into a cart. "They're trying to persuade people that margarine tastes better than butter."

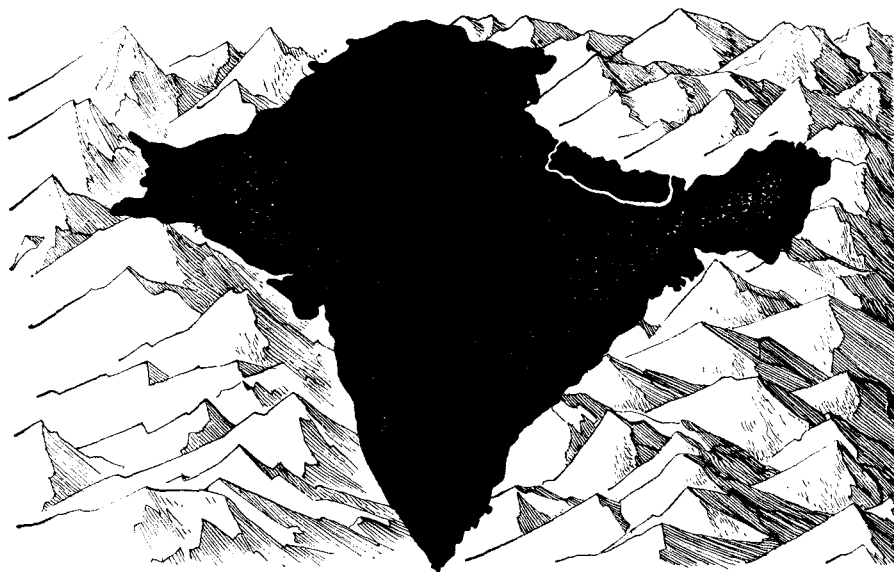
"Then why not call it butter?" I demanded.

"Something to do with the butter lobby in Washington, I guess," he replied, swinging his Fritos bird.

*Luther Stewart will conclude the discussion of his supermarket experiences in the July ATLANTIC.*



# pleasures and places



## NEPAL

BY ROBERT S. KANE

The fifty-minute flight from the Indian frontier city of Patna to Katmandu, the capital of Nepal, is much more than a journey from one ancient country to another. India has been exposed to the rest of the world for hundreds of years. The conquerors, the traders, the diplomats, the tourists have all left their marks. But Nepal, tucked away in the Himalayas, was left alone in almost complete isolation until less than a decade ago.

To visit there today is to leap backward four centuries and more and find oneself in a remote land with a rich culture, a happy, handsome people, and the magnificent, formidable mountains which have been a sort of trade-mark for this otherwise little-known kingdom.

What Marco Polo wrote in the fourteenth century, "The country is little frequented by strangers, whose visits the king discourages," was pretty much the case until 1951, except that in the preceding century it was not the kings who did the discouraging, but the Rana family autocracy.

The Ranas treated all of Nepal as their own estate, kept each successive king a prisoner in his palace, and

with few exceptions, forbade visitors from entering and Nepalese from leaving.

Nepal would probably still be Rana-controlled if, after India received independence, the late King Tribhuvan's followers had not been able to make contacts with the new and sympathetic Indian government, and secure its help in the revolution.

There are still Ranas all about Katmandu, nonetheless. Queen Ratna Devi, wife of the present King Mahendra, is a Rana, and so are a number of civil servants. As the Nepalese explain the situation to surprised visitors, there must be *some* educated people in the government, and the Ranas — of which there were hundreds, with a caste system of their own — were about the only Nepalese allowed a decent education.

It is in a Rana palace that the visitor may well live while in Katmandu. There are eight or ten such buildings, and they constitute the only examples of Western-style architecture in the country. Each is a vast, white-walled Versailles-type pile, surrounded by a formal, French garden which is large enough to be termed a park.

The largest building, once the Prime Minister's home, has fifteen hundred rooms and now serves, more than adequately, as the government's Secretariat. One of the smaller palaces is now the Royal Hotel, owned by the government and operated by a White Russian named Boris Lissanovich and his blonde Danish wife. Most bedrooms are the size of ballrooms, with adjoining tiled baths practically as large. There are Ranas still living in an isolated wing.

The Royal sets an astonishingly good European table, which runs the gamut from borsch to crepes suzette, and rates are \$15 per day for a single room, American plan. The only other eating place is the dining room of the smaller, simpler Snow View Hotel (\$4 for a single room, American plan), run by Tom Menzies, an Anglo-Indian, and his Canadian wife, and often the headquarters for mountaineering parties.

A guide is essential for getting about, and so is a Jeep or an army truck, ordinary cars being too delicate for the rough roads. There are not many Nepalese who speak Western languages, but the two hotels have pressed a handful of qualified people into service. Their rates are \$3 per day; a sturdy truck or Jeep rents for \$10 per day, with chauffeur.

The Valley of Katmandu is the core of the country. Most Nepalese refer to it as the Valley of Nepal, because until recent years the mountain people in the sparsely populated provinces considered themselves citizens of the region in which they lived, with only nebulous, if any, ties to the capital. Still-primitive communications and the terrain have kept this situation little changed, and unless the visitor is a mountain climber, or on a scientific mission, he probably will not leave the valley.

The valley remains quite as it has been for many hundreds of years. There is no newness to distract from its distinctively Nepalese character. Even its setting, at an elevation of 4700 feet, framed by a rim of snow-capped mountains, is in the best travel folder tradition.

In addition to Katmandu (the name in Nepali means "City of Glory"), the valley is the site of Nepal's two other important towns, Patan and Bhadgaon, as well as the great Buddhist centers of Swayambhunath and Bodhnath and the most sacred of the Hindu shrines, Pashupatinath. Common to all are the



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Nepalese genius for design and the basic native building materials, bricks and mortar, which these people have used for centuries. One finds no mud huts, as in neighboring India; even the simplest houses are of brick.

There is not a phase of the decorative arts which has escaped the Nepalese — intricate wood carving in latticework, windows, sills, pillars, cornices, doors; stone carving, particularly of religious figures; fine work in bronze, gold, silver, copper; painting, with a splendid sense of color and perspective.

Never invaded by the Muslims or colonized by Europeans, Nepal developed an indigenous art and architecture, which inspired design in other Eastern countries. "The Nepalese," wrote French Orientalist Sylvan Levi, "changed the arts of India, built temples and palaces which served as models to the Tibetans and Chinese, and created the classical pagoda." What makes these treasures exciting is the fact that virtually all of them are still in use. Only one structure in Nepal is formally designated as a museum, and many visitors never get to it; there is really no need.

Patan's center is a maze of superbly proportioned pagodas, surrounding a cloistered palace whose courtyard contains a sunken pool which was once the bathing place of the kings. In Bhadgaon, the main square is dominated by the enormous Golden Door of the principal palace, with a façade of fifty-five distinctively decorated windows. Overlooking the scene — which includes the five-story Nyatapola, the highest pagoda in the country — is the statue of an ancient king, seated on a towering pedestal, his head covered by a golden umbrella. And in Katmandu itself, the Durbar Square is a cluster of temples. Guarding the most imposing is a huge figure of the monkey god Hanuman.

Even the drive from one valley town to another is not uneventful. There are no beasts of burden in all the country, and there is a never-

ending stream of porters and peasants marching along in single file, with heavily loaded baskets whose straps are secured on their foreheads. High-caste Nepalese rarely walk any considerable distance, and those without cars (motor vehicles are still a rarity) are carried in venerable sedan chairs.

There is always color and movement — women combing yarn on the streets and threshing wheat by hand in the courtyards; children playing,

and their elders praying, in the temple compounds; housewives shopping in the open market stalls and the low-ceilinged little shops.

On a drive with my guide from Katmandu to Swayambhunath, I was stopped by a throng of marchers, most of them beneath splen-

didly decorated yellow umbrellas. High above the crowd were two young boys jogging along in sedan chairs carried by relatives. The occasion was a typical child-wedding. One boy, aged ten, was the brave young groom; the other was his eight-year-old brother, the best man.

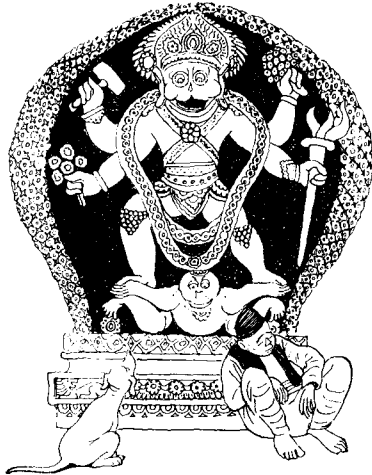
Buddha, who was born in Nepal, is reputed to have visited 2500-year-old Swayambhunath, situated atop a two-hundred-foot hill. Its main stupa is a white brick dome, crowned by a golden pinnacle which is surmounted by an umbrella of burnished gold. On each side of the tower are painted two mystic eyes, symbols of the ever-seeing Buddha, and visible from almost anywhere in the valley.

At Bodhnath is the Buddhist temple which is headquarters for the Lamaist (Tibetan) branch of that faith in Nepal, and there are two representatives of the Dalai Lama in residence, overseeing the staff of Tibetan monks, several of whom insisted on inspecting my camera. One of their chiefs, who lives a chaste life, received me in his simple quarters, where his bearer served Tibetan yak-butter tea (I do not recommend it); the other leader, a worldly gentleman with several wives and numerous offspring, served a highly potent



guava brandy and conversed in fluent English about his early years in Lhasa.

Nepal is not without its Hindu holy men. One sees them (along with scores of well-mannered, and sacred, monkeys) on the grounds of Pashupatinath, the holiest Hindu shrine in the country, and like In-



dia's Benares, on a sacred river, the Bagmati.

Clad only in loincloths, with long beards, tall staffs, and copper pots of holy water, the holy men sit in contemplation by the river or pray within the temple. One, in a hut near the entrance, squats cross-legged day in and day out, receiving the faithful who bring him food and ask for his blessing.

Everywhere in the valley, the people manage to combine in their reception of the foreigner a sense of wonder coupled with a sense of humor. They are inordinately polite and gracious and have infectious grins. And though quite as poor as their often dour Indian neighbors, their outlook is bright and sparkling, thanks perhaps to the Buddhist influence and the relatively healthy mountain climate.

They dress as they always have: women in long, flowing skirts, billowy shawls, and quantities of jewelry; men in homespun costumes with fitted tunics, jodhpur-like trousers, and rakish caps.

They seem to get along well with each other as well as with visitors. There has never been any religious difficulty in Nepal. The two major faiths are peculiarly intermixed, and one finds Hindus at Buddhist stupas and Buddhists at Hindu temples. The two religions are the mainstay of their life, inspiring daily activity, architecture, diet, and social structure. A caste system, Hindu in ori-



## MEET THE BEAUTIFUL AMERICAN

A few years ago life for Chung San Kim was hopeless. He had no home in war ravaged Seoul, Korea. His mother died during the communist invasion. Even the chance to go to school was denied him. His invalided father could not earn enough for Chung San's food and school supplies.

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shack and told Chung San Kim that he had a sponsor . . . a kind person who wished to help children in need. His sponsor was Mrs. Sonia Busch of Millbrook, N. Y. in the United States of America.

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more than the feeding of his hungry body was the chance to feed his equally hungry mind. Mrs. Busch's sponsorship meant Chung San could go to school!

Through correspondence, Mrs. Sonia Busch became more than a name to Chung San Kim . . . more than a sponsor. He called her, "Sister whom I only can see in dream."

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"Autumn has stolen away, and now it is early winter here in Korea. The skeletonized trees without reddened leaves are standing lonely . . . Praying for the happiness of my sister."

At the end of every letter he drew a picture to illustrate his thoughts.

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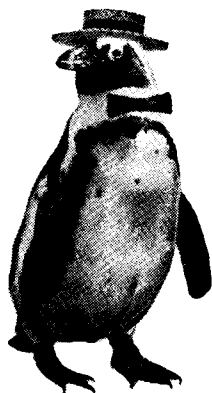
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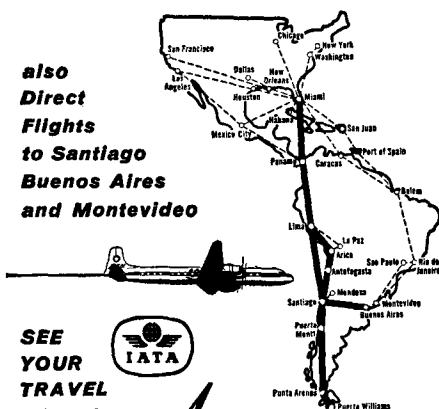
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gin, remains enforced. But a relaxed gaiety and gentleness, typical of Buddhist peoples, seems to lessen its rigidity.

The photographer can count on returning home laden with photographs of persons as well as places; no people in the world are more willing to pose, or indeed more fascinated by the insertion of a roll of film in a camera.

But besides pictures, there is a great deal more that can be brought back from Nepal, most of it best purchased in the shops of Patan, where the country's best artisans live and work.

Outstanding are hand-wrought cigarette and jewel boxes decorated in semiprecious stones; necklaces, bracelets, brooches, earrings of the same materials; Buddhist prayer wheels in silver and copper; wooden yak-butter dishes embellished with brass; Hindu and Buddhist religious figures; wood and ivory carvings; handmade rice paper (the only kind used in Nepal); multicolored prayer masks; homespun cotton and wool yard goods.

Prices are very low (\$2 will buy a beautiful cigarette box, for example), and bargaining is the rule except in the government's emporium in Katmandu, the only fixed-price store in the country. One may use either Indian or Nepalese rupees.

Like most Oriental countries, Nepal requires a visa of visitors. But before applying for it, one should secure first a *double-entry* visa for India from a consulate of that country. This authorizes the initial entry into India from abroad, as well as the return to India from Nepal. Next, two copies of the Nepalese visa application form should be obtained, either by writing the Nepalese Embassy or from a travel agency specializing in Asian bookings, such as American Express.

The completed forms should be mailed to the Embassy of Nepal, 2131 Leroy Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. Accompanying them should be the traveler's passport, two passport-size photos, and a letter from a travel agency or airline certifying that round-trip transportation has been booked. The embassy will visa the passport and return it within a week or ten days.

Cholera, typhoid, and smallpox inoculations are needed, too. Spring and fall are the best seasons for a visit; summer is less good because it is



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the rainy season. In winter there is a great deal of snow.

There are daily Patna-Katmandu flights in both directions, via Indian Airways Corporation's two-engine, nonpressurized and nonairconditioned Dakotas. The line's excellent safety record compensates for the discomfort of the aircraft. Planes from both Calcutta and Delhi make convenient Patna connections.

These days, the Nepalese are terribly busy trying to transform their ancient autocracy into a progressive monarchy. They have already accomplished what many thought impossible — the first elections in their history. With American and other foreign aid, they are attempting needed improvements in agriculture and hygiene.

But they have a long way to go, even by Asian standards. There is a brand-new university but few lower schools and only about 4 per cent literacy. There is a modern international airport, but the postal system still handles only domestic mail. (The Indian Embassy in Katmandu processes foreign mail, and it has been known to falter.)

There is a democratic constitution, but there is also a ten-year-old girl selected by the King to be worshiped as a living goddess; she can be observed any day at her own little palace. And during my visit, the people of the valley heralded the birth of another goddess — a malformed Siamese twin, to whose home I was taken in central Katmandu.

All things considered, there is little likelihood that Nepal will rush too quickly into the twentieth century. But one can never be sure in the age of the technician, and if the prospective visitor has any doubts, he had better lose no time in setting the visa-application wheels in motion.



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# they shall have

BY JOHN M. CONLY



Francis Poulenc has been described as music's tallest living Frenchman. I would have been willing to accept this as a figurative description, long having been a sturdy Poulenc admirer, but I did not recognize it as graphically apt until I sought the man in his hotel in New York. He met me at the elevator, and I had to crane. He towers above one, and, from up yonder, he twinkles — in a way, I think, that anyone who knows his music would expect. It has been said that he resembles the famous comedian Fernandel, and so he does, but the resemblance is superficial, not significant. Really, he made me think rather of pictures of Voltaire, who wasn't tall but who had about him the same quite inimitable air of Paris, the bright wit overlying the deep concern for humanity.

This speaks in his music, for Poulenc is probably today's subtlest musical humorist and most compassionate religious composer. If he had to split these dual honors, it would be with the American Virgil Thomson, with whose work Poulenc's has much in common. Thomson has been the less industrious of the two, but both men have proved — for listeners, at least — that the

comprehensible idiom which sufficed for Brahms and Saint-Saëns suffices still, and amply, when the I.Q. and the spirit behind it are high enough. There is a coincidence beyond my powers to explain in both men's main efforts having been divided between humor and worship. Poulenc sees nothing odd in this, and perhaps neither should anyone.

Poulenc was here to supervise a touring presentation of his opera *La Voix Humaine*, a one-woman telephone monologue of love lost, which also was recorded at the time for RCA Victor records' Soria celebrity series. A generous man, he then went five blocks uptown and made a tape for Columbia of his Piano and Woodwinds Sextet. He is a very good pianist and an appreciative fellow player as well. He said it was "a fun" to perform with the Philadelphia Wind Quintet.

Poulenc's English is easy to understand for anyone with a smattering of French. "Don't make me to be a neoclassicist," he said. "I just write as I want, as it comes to me. Some composers *innove*, but some great composers do not *innove*. Schubert did not *innove*. Wagner, Monteverdi, they *innove*. Debussy *innove*; Ravel does not *innove*. It is not nec-

essary that one *innove*. I am not against, you understand. Today there is the electronic music. Some I like, what I have heard. The *musique concrète* I do not like; it is *sale*; music made with 'teen pote.' 'Teen pote.'" He went into a recess of the apartment and emerged with a small saucepan, on which he hammered redoubtably with a spoon. "'Teen pote,'" he said. *Musique concrète* is the product of tape tinkering with assorted sounds, some of which no doubt have come from tin pots.

Poulenc's greatest successes on records in America have been the Organ Concerto, in an early LP by E. Power Biggs, which, oddly, struck the fancy of hi-fi enthusiasts, by reason of some tremendous pedal and percussion passages, and the *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, an opera about nuns sentenced to execution in the French Revolution. This latter gained impetus from a fine English-language presentation by the NBC-TV Opera Company and was subsequently recorded beautifully (in French) by Angel. It is a devotional work of moving pathos. So is the earlier *Stabat Mater*, still available on Westminster.

"Now I write a sonata for clarinet and piano," he said, moving around the suite and picking things up, because his airplane for Paris was to leave in three hours. "I have just finished a Gloria for soprano, chorus, and orchestra; this Leontyne Price and Charles Munch will perform in February, and also I work upon a Good Friday music for New York Philharmonic — choral, of course."

Poulenc was something of a prodigy. He joined the Paris group of musicians and poets called *Les Six* when he was only eighteen, and charmed post-war audiences with songs, mostly based on poems by Guillaume Apollinaire, and whimsical ballets. He was thought afterwards, by many critics, to have lost his spark, which may prove simply that they were not listening. There is, for instance, nothing flimsy or transient about the Organ Concerto; it is gripping, exciting, at once deep and accessible.

"I would like if Mr. Biggs does this again," said Poulenc. "With the new records it would make a good effect."

I asked E. Power Biggs about this. "Nothing I'd rather do," he said briskly. I called Columbia. "It's on



# New recordings you'll want to hear...

**BEETHOVEN:** Sonata No. 3 in A Major for 'Cello and Piano, Op. 69. **BRAHMS:** Sonata No. 2 in F Major for 'Cello and Piano, Op. 99. Maurice Gendron, Cellist and Philippe Entremont, Pianist. ML 5465/MS 6135 (Stereo). "... Gifted French musicians of extraordinary technique and sensibility," says The New York Times. Two dramatic and important works impressively performed.

**ARIAS, ANTHEMS AND CHORALS OF THE AMERICAN MORAVIANS, Volume 1: Chorus and Orchestra under Thor Johnson. ML 5427/MS 6102 (Stereo).** "One of the finest choral recordings ever made by Columbia . . . delightful to the ear."—Bethlehem Globe-Times. And the News Bulletin of the Moravian Music Foundation calls this recording "... simply magnificent... a significant milestone in American music."

**PROKOFIEV:** Suite from "The Love for Three Oranges"; and Scythian Suite, Op. 20. The St. Louis Symphony; Edouard Van Remoortel, Conductor. ML 5462/MS 6132 (Stereo). Recorded in the Old Beer Hall of St. Louis, famous for its incomparable acoustics. The Prokofiev score, heavy in percussion, brass and woodwind, is recorded with a live quality rarely equaled.

**JUST FOR LISTENING:** Andre Kostelanetz conducting the New York Philharmonic. Includes "On The Trail" by Grofé; Prelude in C-sharp Minor and "Oh, Bess, Where's My Bess" by Gershwin; A Portrait in Music: an arrangement of Jerome Kern melodies. ML 5463/MS 6133 (Stereo). For the first time a recording of this Jerome Kern medley, A Portrait in Music. Andre Kostelanetz conducts one of the great orchestras of the world in fine popular concert repertoire.

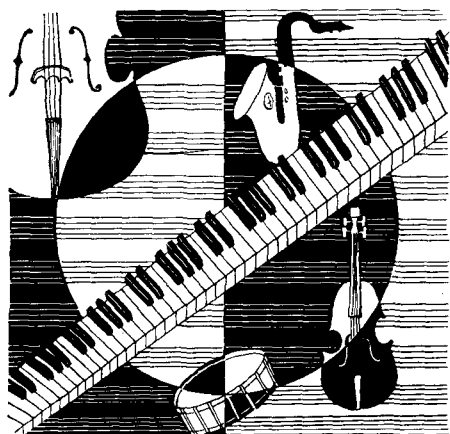
**RELIGIOUS MUSIC—HOLY GOD WE PRAISE THY NAME—A program of Catholic Hymns. Choir of the Church of St. Dominic, Cal Stepan, Choirmaster. ML 5468/MS 6126 (Stereo).** This album includes most of the hymns sung throughout the year by Catholic congregations. All but two sung in English.

**THE MASS CELEBRANT:** Canon Sydney MacEwan and the Choir of the Church of Santa Susanna. KL 5311. The Catholic newspaper, the Pilot, writes: "The arts of writing, singing, printing and recording are all joined by Columbia to explain the Mass to the average layman better than I have ever seen it presented before." Album includes 32-page, profusely illustrated book.

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our minds," said John McClure, artists and repertoire director, "but a special sound is called for. Wait till we find the right organ."



### The Young Voices

The overture ended; the gold curtain went up; and a young lady from Mexico City named Carmen de Solis came out on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House and sang *Caro Nome*. Being no opera buff, I do not know on what note this aria ends, but I do know it is awfully high and hard and that Miss de Solis made an angelic pianissimo of it. She knew this, too, and favored us with a delightful Latin grin as she walked off.

Thus began the second New York finals of the Metropolitan Opera auditions, one of the most exciting and depressing events of the musical year. I say "exciting" because the seventeen young voices brought forth from North America's various regions were exciting, even in time-worn arias. I say "depressing" because I cannot help thinking about what Mickey Mantle is going to be paid this summer to hit a baseball with a bat. The best these youngsters, who can sing Tosca and Siegmund and Gilda, may hope for are a couple of \$2000 scholarships and, for one of them, a beginner's Met contract.

The 1960 Met contract was won by a graceful Californian mezzo named Mary MacKenzie. She sang *O mio Fernando*, accompanied by a middle-aged lady who sat in front of me and hummed, not quite on key. I would have tapped her shoulder, except that I figured she might be one of the many people there who tionar-en \$500 or \$250 to the Na-Opera, which of the Metropolitan hundreds of hearings all over the

continent which yield the finalists. Young Mr. Howard Hook, the council's chairman, and Mr. John Gutman, one of the Metropolitan's two assistant managers, make the arrangements and do the listening. They do it, as the phrase goes, *con amore* and indefatigably, and their harvest is astounding. We have on this continent a quite wonderful supply of magnificent young voices, with good musical brains behind them.

Unfortunately we have in this country, so far as I know, fewer than a half-dozen opera companies that present anything like a full season. So what do these youngsters do? They go to West Germany, where nearly every town big enough to call itself a city has a state-subsidized opera theater. (Ironically, many of these have been substantially helped by American aid money.) Sometimes one wonders about America's boast that it is the world's most musical nation.

### Acoustic Researcher

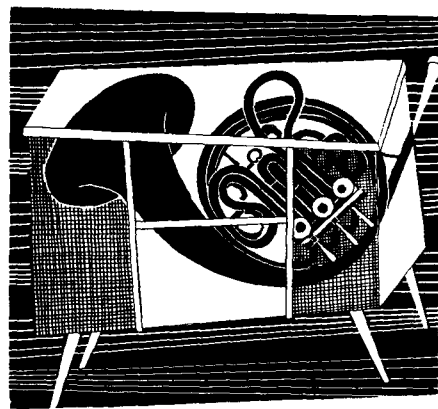
"I'm retiring from the rat race," said Edgar Villchur in 1952, when he was only thirty-five. It wasn't too arduous a rat race, really, since he was an instructor in electronics at New York University, but Villchur speaks colorfully, nowadays from under a piratical mustache. Anyway, he bought a house in Woodstock, New York, and became 1) a free-lance writer, 2) a choral singer, and 3) a researcher in loudspeaker design, since he hated the massive and distortion-prone devices where-with he had to listen to his Bach and Stravinsky. This is what put him back into the rat race, since he is now president of Acoustic Research, Inc., better known to hi-fidelitarians as AR.

AR, which has established the small loudspeaker on the American listening scene, began when Villchur wondered whether a speaker cone might not give truer, firmer bass if it were cushioned by air in a sealed box than if it had to depend on its own built-in elasticity. Villchur impressed his wife into service, and they sawed and hammered and soldered until they could try the air-cushion theory. It worked. The box was small enough to sit on, and twenty-cycle tones came out of it like Mr. Kipling's Chinese thunder. "The smallness of acoustic-suspension speaker systems," Villchur says,

"is incidental to the production of pure bass. It's easier to use the mechanical properties of air in a small enclosure than in a big one." The mechanical properties of air turned out to be highly salable. This year Acoustic Research will ship 40,000 loudspeaker systems. Best seller will be the ninety-six-dollar AR-2, since people are buying it in pairs, because of the onset of stereo. Next will come the original model AR-1, a little bigger at \$185, and then the no-compromise AR-3 (\$225), designed by Villchur as a loudspeaker with no beam effect or directionality at all, which he says is the type needed for proper stereophonic ambience.

"This was the nearest thing to music we could make," he says of the AR-3. "I knew we were a success to start with when I brought a pilot model home and my wife said, 'What a quiet speaker!' Men accuse women of being against high fidelity. They're not. When a woman says, 'Turn it down,' she means to turn down the distortion. Most women hear better than men.

"I'm going to get out of the rat race again," Villchur went on. "I'm sick of commuting across Massachusetts, but mainly, I've built a dream laboratory on Overlook



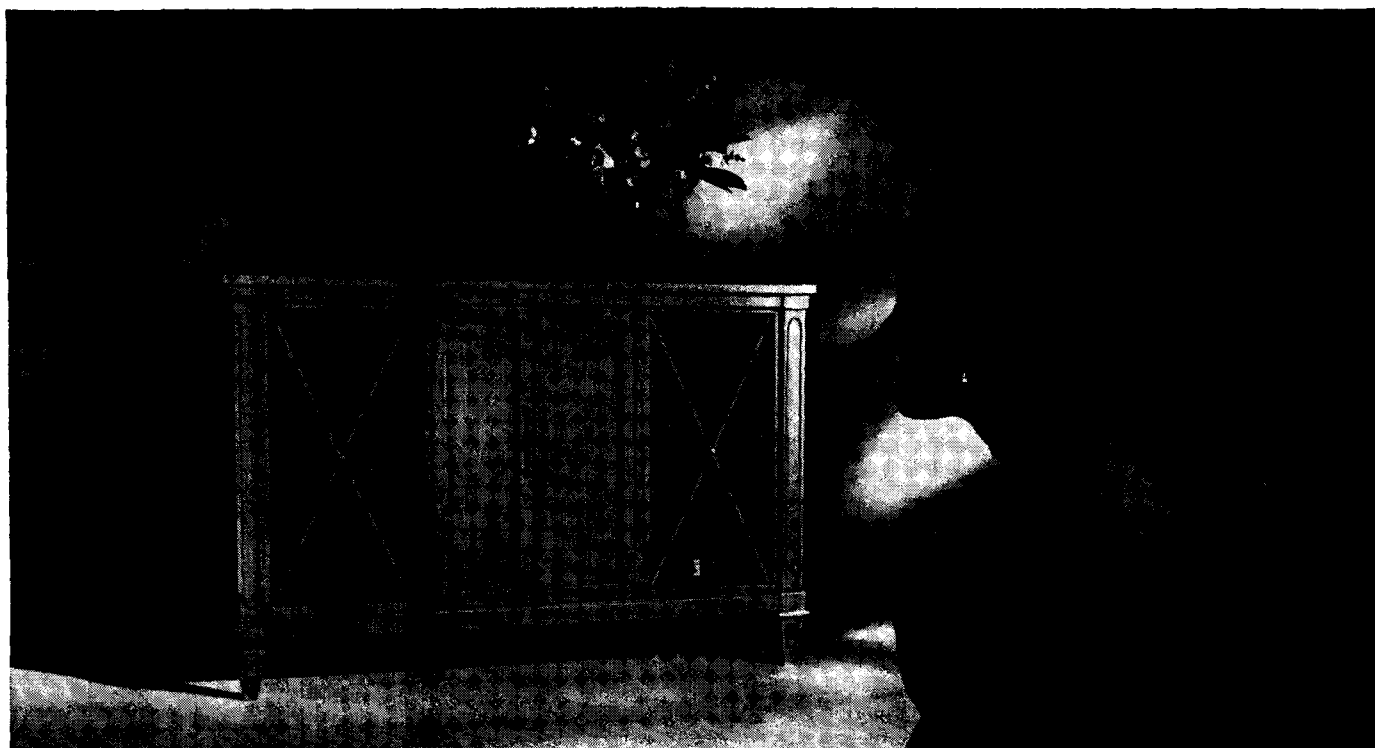
Mountain in Woodstock, and I want to get at hearing aids. The reason people are ashamed of hearing aids — as they are not of eyeglasses — is that everyone knows they don't work. At least, they don't work as well as they should. When you wear a hearing aid, people feel obliged to yell at you. I think, or at any rate I hope, that I can design some that *do* work.

"They don't really need me at the plant anyway," said Villchur with a pleased smile. "I've got a perfect and flexible staff. One of

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them used to teach history. One taught German literature. One was a choral director, and one a magazine editor. I never took an engineering degree myself.

"Now I'm on my way from Woodstock to the plant in Cambridge. It's a day's work just getting to work, though it's not so bad as when I had to go to N.Y.U. to lecture once a week as well. The luxury I really want is to be at research all day long." Whereupon the leading maker of compact loudspeakers departed for the western end of the Massachusetts Turnpike, whistling something that sounded like Bach, and probably was.

## Record Reviews

### Bach: Mass in B minor

*Hermann Scherchen conducting soloists, Vienna Academy Chorus, Vienna State Opera Orchestra; Westminster WST-304 (stereo) and 3305; three records*

Sebastian Bach was our greatest and godliest writer of music. He went blind, but he had a sight beyond vision, which anyone can share by listening to the Mass in B minor. This is really not a unitary mass, but a compilation of Bach's own devotional music that he loved best and considered best keyed to the heaven he hoped for. It is endearing, reverent, and overpowering. Its best recording until now was on early LPs made by the German-Swiss Hermann Scherchen, a man who can compel ecstasies from choruses. The otherwise excellent recording was impaired by bad tape machines, which altered the tempos and the pitch. Now Dr. Scherchen has tried again, and the pitch is right. So are the inspired Viennese choristers and the blazing trumpets. Sometimes the basso, Gustave Neidlinger, runs a little short of wind, but I won't blame him. This music could make anyone breathless.

### Bartók: Concertos No. 2 and No. 3

*Gyorgy Sandor, piano; Michael Gielen conducting Vienna Pro Musica Orchestra; Vox ST-511490 (stereo) and 11490* No. 1 is virtuosic and Hungarian, written by the composer as pianist. The piano-kettledrum duet in the middle is memorable; the whole work is highly vivid. No. 3 was composed in Bartók's Carolina retire-

ment and is much less percussive and more introspective. Sandor played the première of No. 3 and patently knows both very thoroughly. The orchestra comports itself well, and the Vox sound is exemplary.

### Beethoven: Octet in E flat for Winds, Opus 103

*Mozart: Serenade No. 11 in E flat, K. 375*

*Prague Woodwind Octet; Vanguard 2043 (stereo) and 1046*

The gentry from beyond the Curtain, having mastered space in one way, now essay it in another. By which I mean, this is a good stereo recording, if not as good as our best. And the playing, by Prague Conservatory professors, leaves nothing to be desired. The Beethoven, an early work despite its opus number, is the livelier; the Mozart, the more pensive.

### Beethoven: Violin Concerto

*Isaac Stern, violin; Leonard Bernstein conducting New York Philharmonic Orchestra; Columbia MS-6093 (stereo) and ML-5415*

This is the most beautiful Beethoven Violin Concerto since stereo started. Stern is one of few violinists who can unfearfully match bows with Heifetz, and the Columbia microphones give him an edge in sonic fidelity over the Heifetz-Munch effort. Bernstein does a little romanticizing, but not much, and he shows that he knows why Beethoven put in the trumpets.

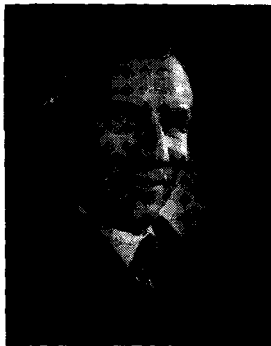
### Schubert: Quartet No. 14, "Death and the Maiden"; "Quartettsatz, in C minor"

*Juilliard String Quartet; RCA Victor LSC-2378 (stereo) and LM-2378*

The subtitle for Schubert's penultimate quartet comes from the title of a song, written earlier, whose theme he used in the andante. However, there is something foreboding, even a little frightening, about the whole quartet, so the title is not amiss. There is violence in it, too, that is quite foreign to our notion of the gentler, younger Schubert. It is terrible that this man had to die when he was so clearly — here, as in the C-major Symphony — just starting something new and obviously very big and important. The *Quartettsatz* is a brilliant movement of a work never finished. The Juilliards play with clean tone and clear perception, and the record — especially in the stereo version — gives them a striking lifelikeness.

# BOOKSHELF

THE ATLANTIC



Karsh

## *The Peripatetic Reviewer* BY EDWARD WEEKS

JUST as the Tower of London, best seen on a misty day, preserves the relics of power and cruelty, and the crown jewels of the English monarchy; just as the Vatican and St. Peter's are the living symbols of the beauty, the dedication, and the temporal power of the Roman Catholic Church, so the Kremlin is the heart, the tyranny, and the heritage of Russia. Within those red, crenelated walls with their nineteen dominating towers is a stronghold of palaces, cathedrals, private chapels, a royal theater, barracks, stables, administration buildings, and museums, miraculously preserving from invasions and rebellions the rich hoarding of eight hundred years. One comes away stunned by the immense size, by the blaze of the screens and the icons, by the incomparable craftsmanship of the jewels and vestments, the inlaid thrones, the golden coronation coaches, the incredible gifts.

In order not to be overwhelmed, it is best to hold tight to the little, common impressions. You approach the Kremlin on foot up the ramp leading to the Borovitskaya Tower, one of a hurrying, expectant crowd. Emerging from the great gate, you pause to take in the sweeping view over Moscow; you note the flower beds and the steep wooded slopes leading down to the inner moat. This would have been a tough baby for archers to assault. A big queue is forming in front of the Hall of Arms, and you join up. Only a limited quota is admitted at a time, and your first act in the vestibule is to fish out a pair of floppy carpet slippers from a huge carton and tie them on over your shoes. It makes you feel sheepish, but it explains why the parquet is immaculate. As you ascend the grand stairway, your eye is caught by two ancient paintings, one of the earliest Kremlin, built of white sandstone, like a vast blockhouse above the snowy plain which is now the city; the other, of the sixteenth-century Kremlin of Ivan the Great, with the Uspensky domes rising from

within and the newly built chapels of St. Basil's at the head of Red Square. It is significant that with these two primitives there is a third, more dramatic canvas of an aged priest, the Metropolitan Philip, on his knees as the assassins for Ivan the Terrible unlock his cell. A grim reminder.

This building was designed as a national museum in the 1890s, and one of the first edicts issued by Lenin over the wireless of the cruiser *Aurora* in October, 1917, was to keep it inviolate. The airy, spacious rooms with their great glass cases are a perfect environment. Skiing along the waxed floor on my slippers, I tried to associate these objects with the rulers who used them. I did not feel Peter the Great's presence here as vividly as in his Summer Palace at Leningrad, but his jack boots — which he made himself — and uniforms are larger by far than those of any other czar. Catherine comes alive in her robes and coronation dress; wonderful that brocade, pearl-encrusted silk, and silver bullion thread should retain their luster so long. I saw her again in the carriage sledge, with its upholstery, warming pan, and folding table, a roomette on runners in which she used to travel the snowbound leagues from one capital to the other. Here are the ostentatious gifts she made to Prince Potemkin, and some he made to her. Most pathetic are the fabulous Easter eggs with their jeweled miniatures of the Romanovs, designed for the last of the czars. A tiny model of the czar's yacht was inside one crystal eggshell, and beside it a little wind-up train of platinum for his ailing son.

An earthquake did much to wreck the Kremlin in the reign of Ivan the Great. To repair the damage, he imported the Italian architects who were responsible for the great cathedrals which now open on to Kremlin Square. The very old icons and the original frescoes, filmed with smoke from a million candles, were painted over, plastered over, and lost from view. Now, thanks to fastidious

restoration, reaching down, in some instances, through five layers of painting, the pristine artistry is again in the clear.

From the steps of the Uspensky Cathedral, as you look up to the left, a cluster of gaily painted small onion domes rising from the roof of the Terem Palace suggests an inner sanctuary, the Golden Throne Room and the czar's private chapel and bedroom, the most inaccessible suite in the Kremlin in olden times. You still have to get a special permit to see these rooms, and it certainly is worth waiting for. Our young receptionist was one of the comeliest Russians I have seen, very fair, with a skin that flushed easily. She led us up two long flights and into living quarters of utmost fascination: small, the alcoves and walls covered either with heavy gold decorations or with frescoes of spring flowers; the throne room, rosy from the light streaming in through the tinted mica windows; the czar's bedroom, dwarfed by a massive tiled stove and a wooden, canopied four-poster. The bed was plainly a replica and too narrow.

"Where did the czarina sleep?" I asked.

"That is an unprofessional question," our pretty guide said, coloring like a carnation.

"I know," I said. "But that's not the real bed—what happened to it?"

"You're right," she replied, still blushing. "It was burned by Napoleon."

From there we descended to the suite of Nicholas II in the Great Kremlin Palace, and to his empress's boudoir, ornate and rigidly ugly, and into the breath-taking Hall of St. George, the ivory and gold ballroom with its great domed ceiling which Catherine built from the rubble left by Napoleon, the name of every regiment, every hero decorated with the St. George cross inscribed in gold upon its walls.

"What is it used for today?" I asked.

"Official receptions," she said. "And then, during the Christmas holidays, the children of Moscow come here for their tree and their presents. Two thousand of them at a time, twice a day for two weeks."

"Wow!" I said. "That must be something to see!" and then, as I glanced down at the exquisite parquet, "I suppose you must put a covering on the floor for all those wet little feet."

"Yes," she answered. "That is a professional question."

#### THE HEART OF RUSSIA

The Soviets have published a handsome collection of photographs of the Kremlin in a volume which is sold at the kiosk in Cathedral Square. But a still more sumptuous volume has appeared

this spring under American auspices. In the fall of 1956, **DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN** was in Russia to do a photographic essay of the Volga; he arrived too late, the river was already freezing, and so instead, at a chance meeting with Khrushchev in the Turkish Embassy, he asked if he might photograph the Kremlin. The Premier gave his consent, and for the next three years, on five successive trips to Moscow, Mr. Duncan took the pictures and assimilated the history which together make **THE KRÉMLIN** (New York Graphic Society, \$25.00) the most beautiful book on Russia I have seen. The eighty-three color photographs were taken on Kodachrome, with two 35-millimeter Leica M3D cameras fitted with Canon, Nikkor, and Zeiss-Biogon lenses. The interiors were made by time exposures utilizing the existing light, whether in the Golden Garret or in the private chapel where only the czar's family worshiped. These pictures bring home the grandeur and the beauty, and the text, concise and well selected, provides a sense of progression; it establishes the necessary background and gives one to understand what each of the rulers, including Lenin, has contributed to this treasury of a nation.

#### A STUDY IN JUSTICE

C. P. SNOW is in the substantial tradition of the English novel. He always has a story to tell, and he tells it with the thoroughness and craftsmanship of a Galsworthy; he is an excellent portraitist of men, especially men of intellect—the scholar-scientist—whose motives, vanities, and subtle resourcefulness he understands with masculine certainty; finally, he knows and enjoys the refinements of university life and savors the rivalry for power and honors, which can be quite as unscrupulous in that society as in the city. In **THE AFFAIR** (Scribner's, \$4.50), he is writing of Cambridge and of a college which bears resemblance to Trinity. One of the younger fellows has been accused of using fabricated photographs in support of a thesis, and when he passes the blame on to his senior, a scientist of high standing, now dead, a scandal is incipient which the college authorities are quick to cover up.

The accused, Donald Howard, is a Marxist and belligerently class-conscious. He makes a poor witness, and he cannot produce the distorted photograph which he claims he used in good faith and the presence of which might exonerate him. He is dropped from the college rolls, and had it not been for his passionate, strong-willed wife, the case would have been closed. The man who reopens it at Laura Howard's insistence is Lewis Eliot, an ex-fellow of the college and a barrister who has risen to distinction in the government. Through



Eliot's disciplined reasoning in cross-examination the case becomes more than a battle of wits, more than an academic tempest in a teapot. Eliot's deft handling of the master, of Arthur Brown, the senior tutor and a traditionalist, of Nightingale, the fussy bursar, and, most surprising of all, of the ninety-four-year-old Icelandic scholar, M. H. L. Gay, is what makes this such an engrossing story.

One of the delights in reading Mr. Snow is to pick up his peppery observation of contemporary life. One cannot fail to respond to phrases such as these: "we were reminding each other in the shorthand of marriage"; "she asked after our child, but with the touch of impatience of people who haven't any"; "she could not sympathise with the shifts, the calculations, the self-seekingness of men making their way." For its vitality and excellence, I should put this book beside *The Masters*, which up until now has been Mr. Snow's best.

#### MANAGING EDITOR ON TRIAL

The relationship between the owner of a great publishing property and his chief editor is always a sensitive one, and it can be a mind tamer. This is the heart of the matter in T. S. MATTHEWS' highly readable autobiography, *NAME AND ADDRESS* (Simon and Schuster, \$4.50). The son of Bishop Matthews of New Jersey, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, young Tom Matthews suffered through a rather sheltered boyhood, over-protected by his mother, aunts, sisters, and governess. He began to find himself at St. Paul's, and even more at Princeton, and after a training in ideals on the staff of the *New Republic*, where he worshiped Herbert Croly and was coached by Edmund Wilson, he came to the staff of *Time* eager to write but distrustful of his administrative ability. Of these early days he says, "On every piece of copy I typed I could have written with truth, 'I do not like my work.'" But he stayed on, withdrawing from the hurly-burly to do the book reviews and occasionally the columns on religion. His copy was excellent and influential; it helped to set a new tone for *Time*. Later, when he was called to be managing editor and was promoted as far as one could go, his fairness was disputed and his judgment questioned, particularly in national affairs.

There is too much porch to the meetinghouse in *Name and Address*; there are too many excursions in childhood before one comes to know the maturing man. But the characterizations, even of boyhood, are terse and lively, especially of those who rub him the wrong way; and Mr. Matthews' probing assessment of American journalism is honest and unsparing save for one detail: Why did he endure his unhappiness for so long?

## BOOKS THE EDITORS LIKE

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#### *Love on a Branch Line* BY JOHN HADFIELD

A nice lighthearted comic novel, set in England and full of improbable peers, unlikely crackpots, obliging beauties, and a train that is even better than an Emmett cartoon. LITTLE, BROWN, \$4.00.

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The reign of Edward the Confessor and the intrigues leading up to the Norman Conquest, told by an old and loyal servant of King Edward. As usual, Mr. Duggan brings the distant past to crackling, convincing life. PANTHEON, \$3.50.

#### *The Violent Bear It Away*

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Miss O'Connor's writing is always distinguished, and this story of religious uproar in the Southern backwoods is funny, satirical, and far more meaningful than its witty surface at first glance indicates. FARRAR, STRAUS & CUDAHY, \$3.75.

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#### *Old English Poetry*

An anthology of Anglo-Saxon poetry — lyrics, religious poems, laments, reports of battles, and fragments of the epic of *Beowulf*; translated by Charles W. Kennedy into modern English with persuasive rhythm and considerable poetic authority. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, \$4.50.

#### *The Powers of Poetry* BY GILBERT HIGHET

Essays, mostly short, some originally written as book reviews, on a wide variety of poets and their works. One piece is titled "Anacreon to Shelley," and that neatly sums up the breadth of Mr. Highet's interest. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, \$6.00.

#### *The Lamp of Beauty* BY JOHN RUSKIN

Selected and edited by Joan Evans, Ruskin's writings on art are still of great interest, and always were admirable prose. The book is illustrated with color plates, including some Pre-Raphaelite stuff of marvelous absurdity. DOUBLEDAY, \$6.95.

#### *The Beats*

A collection of writing, edited by Seymour Krim, by and about the beats — fiction, essays, poetry, and plays; most of it spirited stuff, if sometimes disorderly. GOLD MEDAL, 35¢.

#### *In Search of Swift* BY DENIS JOHNSTON

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# BOOKSHELF

THE ATLANTIC



## Reader's Choice

BY PHOEBE ADAMS

MY LIFE (Orion, \$6.00), the autobiography that MARC CHAGALL wrote before leaving Russia in 1922, has at last been handsomely published in this country, complete with the illustrations designed for it by the author. A painter who can also write is not exactly unusual. Michelangelo would be remembered as a respectable poet if he were not unforgettable on other counts, and Ben Shahn writes about art with a grace and depth that put most professional aestheticians to shame.

It is unusual, however, for a painter to display in writing what are recognizably the same characteristics that appear in his pictures, and this is what Chagall succeeds, most delightfully, in doing. He writes with the same pseudochildish directness and the same mixture of literal-mindedness with unorthodox fancy that distinguish his painting. Describing a Day of Atonement service in his boyhood, he tells how "Hundreds of candles glow, like flaming hyacinths, in boxes filled with earth," and goes on to say that before they went to the synagogue his father provided his mother with a cued book of prayers. "In one corner he writes: 'Begin here.' Near a touching passage he notes: 'Weep.'"

It is clear that his childhood in an obscure Russian Jewish town provided Chagall with subject matter for a lifetime of painting. The wonder is that he got a chance to use it. Painters, except of signs, were unheard of, and the boy's mania for drawing aroused no more sympathy among his relatives than a taste for kite flying would have done. The opposition that might have sprung up in a more sophisticated family was equally lacking. The Chagalls had no fear of Bohemian garrets for

their son because they didn't really know such things existed. Besides, the boy's activities must have kept them in doubt about his intentions for years. He had a go at singing under the tutelage of the cantor and dreamed of the conservatory; he fiddled with the foot-tapping local violinist and dreamed of the conservatory; he danced with his sister for the amusement of neighbors and relatives—same dream. He wrote verses. "People spoke well of them. I thought: I'll be a poet, I'll go to . . . I no longer knew where to let myself go."

By his own account, Chagall was a handsome, timid boy with a bad stutter, but in the cause of painting he became a seething dragon. He beat his way from a local art school to Saint Petersburg, although Imperial Russia did not permit Jews in Saint Petersburg except under special dispensation, and the study of painting was not considered a suitable reason for granting one. Chagall survived regardless of official interference, found patrons, and went to Paris.

By 1914 he was exhibiting, selling pictures, and making quite a name for himself. He celebrated by going home to Russia and marrying his boyhood sweetheart over the bewildered laments of her family, a clan of prosperous, conservative jewelers. The war kept Chagall and his bride penned in Russia, where he was drafted into the army and learned, to his own surprise, to make out reports without visibly demoralizing the service. Then the Revolution swept away the jewelry business and landed Chagall at the helm of an art school which proposed to glorify the new Communist world. Living conditions were appalling, and Chagall, harassed by intrigues among his assistants and interrupted by nineteen-year-old commissars asking, "Why is the cow green?" lost patience. He took his wife and small daughter to Paris and stayed there.

*My Life*, written at the time when he had decided to leave for France, is Chagall's farewell to Russia. The country had treated him no better than countries generally treat highly original artists, but he loved it for his parents' sake, for the half-dozen people who had helped him, and for his own childhood. The book fairly vibrates with nostalgia and with an affection that converts the author's most unpleasant experiences into

something bearable and even amusing. A man with any talent for self-pity could make five acts of melodramatic martyrdom out of the story; Chagall rarely goes beyond the sadness of all human life, which he combats indomitably with green cows and angelic visions.

#### CHALLENGE TO THE BEAT

Nostalgia is an unexpected ingredient of **REFLECTIONS OF AN ANGRY MIDDLE-AGED EDITOR** (Random House, \$3.95) by **JAMES A. WECHSLER**, editor of the *New York Post*, a stubborn liberal and one of the few men who had the courage to snarl openly at the late Senator McCarthy in the sunlit noon of his power. In addition to his other activities, Mr. Wechsler is a ready participant in public debates. This book is the outgrowth of one such debate with Jack Kerouac, self-elected spokesman of that group of conscientious nonconformists called "the beat."

Mr. Wechsler found that he could not define any common ground on which he could debate with Mr. Kerouac, who seemed to him to be speaking strange tongues and referring to some other world. Inability to communicate meaning is a condition guaranteed to disturb an editor, for it strikes at the very root of his function. Mr. Wechsler began to worry about the beat. He himself has spent twenty-five years working for what he described, on that occasion, as "a world in which there is love, compassion, justice and freedom."

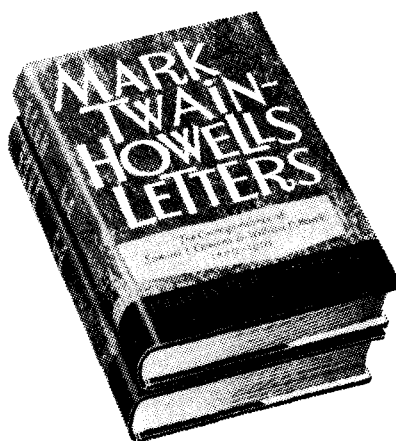
The discovery that a number of young people, and some not so young, consider words like "justice" and "freedom" meaningless hypocrisy and prefer to sit under a tree and polish their souls shook up Mr. Wechsler quite thoroughly. He asked himself how it happens that in a generally improved society — like anyone who saw the Depression of the thirties from the bottom up, Mr. Wechsler has no doubt that our society has, in many respects, improved — a group of bright people should choose nonparticipation rather than make any attempt to commit themselves to the working of that society, much less to its further improvement.

The beat, Mr. Wechsler decides, represent the extreme form of an indolence that has spread through

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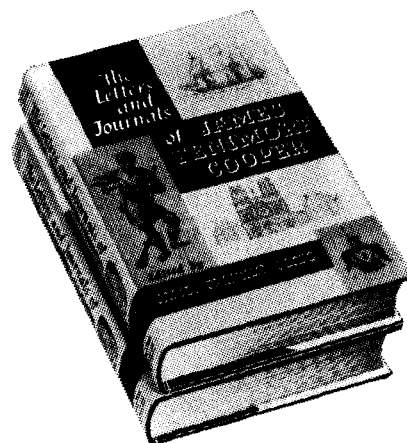
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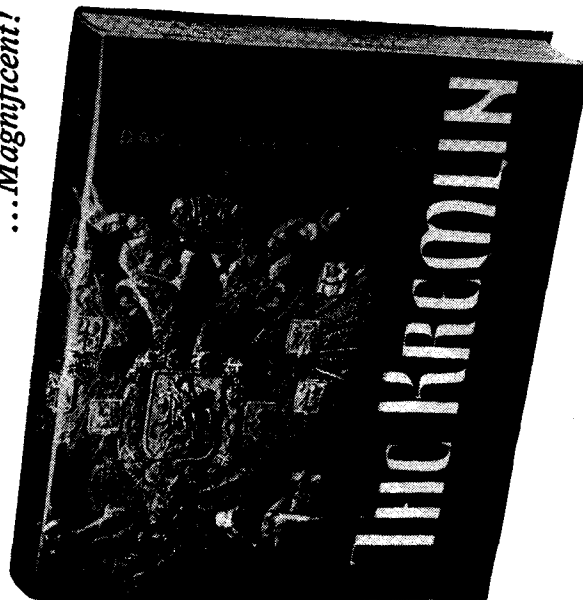
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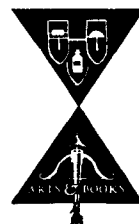
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the whole American community, replacing the reforming zeal of thirty years ago. Nobody cares any more, growls Mr. Wechsler, surveying thirty years of liberal effort with an increasingly gloomy eye. In fact, he finds much to deplore. He duly notes the gains, but he chronicles compromise, failure of nerve, good causes forgotten, and cures that have proved almost as troublesome as the original diseases. He lists sins of omission, ranging from the lack of public debate about the continuance of universal military training to the lack of any plan for coping with large-scale unemployment if it should occur. He observes that election campaigns are fought not on great issues, but in a determined attempt to keep those issues from the attention of the voters.

Given the curious state of apathy and evasiveness which Mr. Wechsler finds characteristic of our times, he cannot seriously reproach those citizens who turn up the hi-fi set and drown out the whole dreary business. Instead, he reproaches his own contemporaries and liberals in general, asking how all those dreams of justice and freedom turned into petitions for lower taxes and better suburban garbage collection.

The last question never is answered. Mr. Wechsler is neither a sociologist, a social psychologist, nor a philosopher. He does not probe into dark corners, and the materials of his book are the observations of a practical journalist with a passionate interest in politics and a conviction that, although utopia is unreachable, betterment is always obtainable. What irks him about our society is the tendency to let well enough alone, although he concedes that things are a bit more complicated than they were in his youth. Refusing to accept complication as an excuse for inaction, Mr. Wechsler concludes that the question is "whether the confusions and disappointments of the last two decades have destroyed our will and desire to do anything, and whether we have communicated—however indistinctly and falteringly—to those younger than ourselves the sense that our failure justifies their apathy."

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novel in which all the characters are over twenty and no one is seduced in the course of the action.

The book is entirely concerned with the dinner party of the title, and its interest depends upon the contrast between what is said by the eight people around the table and what they are thinking. They are not an excessively congenial group. The host is a successful journalist with one frightfully distinguished novel to his credit. On his left sits the handsome, bird-witted wife of an American film producer who crumped out on the party at the last moment. Beyond her sits a famous French script writer who hankers to be a novelist. The hostess is a nice young woman, chiefly, and boringly, interested in her children. On her left is a melancholy businessman, then a French-Canadian model in search of a movie part, then a sulky young man dragged in as substitute for the missing American, and finally, next to the host again, Eugénie, an ancient belle whose fashionably giddy past hasn't deterred her from swathing herself in frumpish shawls and sweaters.

The table is round and the conversation is general but unrewarding. The host, an incorrigible philanderer, is interested chiefly in seeing that none of the ladies present says anything indiscreet. The model is annoyed because, in the absence of the film producer, she cannot decide which of the other men to attack. The young man is nervous about his manners and eager to impress his elders, whom he heartily despises. The film producer's wife is in her normal state — that is to say, semicomatose and dreaming indiscriminately of her lover, her dachshund, and her horoscope. This leaves the field largely to old Eugénie and the businessman, who play interminably that French form of gamesmanship which consists of attempting to dredge up historical or literary references which the opponent cannot identify.

While Eugénie and Roland cavort among the lesser Hapsburgs, the rest of the company prattles vaguely and thinks, or schemes, or flirts, or reminisces in private. By the end of the book, the reader knows what these people are like, what they have done, and what they are probably going to do. Nothing profound has been revealed, but the rather tricky task that the author has undertaken has



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been deftly and interestingly accomplished.

NATHALIE SARRAUTE'S *THE PLANETARIUM* (Braziller, \$4.00), translated by Maria Jolas, resembles *The Dinner Party* in basing its effects on the contrast between surface action and subterranean feeling, but it is a far more subtle, intricate book. Miss Sarraute undertakes to reveal the almost unconscious reactions of her characters to a series of quite ordinary events, in this case a small family row over a pair of leather armchairs and the possession of Auntie's spacious apartment.

Now, if such a story is to generate any great excitement, it must be assumed, as Miss Sarraute does assume, that every character's unconscious reacts violently to the slightest stimulus. She also assumes that the unconscious views every stimulus as a threat. ("Unconscious" is not the right word here, but I know of no term that defines the exact area which this author explores. She deals with emotions and ideas, usually misconceptions, which the conscious mind never formulates, being trained to sort out and discard these things before they reach coherent shape. Miss Sarraute nevertheless expresses them with perfect coherence.) The result of Miss Sarraute's highly individual method is a book that is sometimes acute and always intelligent but which reminds me of those cartoons in which sad little people made of half-cooked spaghetti are always trying to climb down from bottomless peaks or meeting nose-to-nose in one-way mole runs. It may be true that things are tough all over, but the theme requires a little variation if it is not to make them tougher.

A novel in which all the characters are touchy, cowardly, selfish, and whining runs the risk of monotony. The fact that these characters behave with outward decency doesn't outweigh the sameness of their inward minds, for Miss Sarraute is not interested in exterior actions and gives them only enough attention to account for their repercussions at the unconscious level. Technically the book is a remarkable feat, but if Miss Sarraute's method is carried much further, we will be getting novels in which the anguish of ordering toast and coffee is described through the unconscious of the hero's deceased great-grandmother. When that day

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comes, I think I'll just go to a good movie.

#### TO BE OR NOT TO BE

FALLOUT (Basic Books, \$5.50) is subtitled *A Study of Superbombs, Strontium 90 and Survival* and consists of a series of pieces by experts in various aspects of the subject, connected by the summaries and explanations of the editor, JOHN M. FOWLER. Information about the effects of atomic bombs, exploded either experimentally or as weapons, has reached the public in such a disjointed way and has been accompanied by so much hysteria and official disagreement that it is a relief to come upon a book which attempts to cover all the aspects of thermonuclear weapons simply, factually, and calmly. If readers of *Fallout* panic, it is no fault of the authors.

Although the book concludes, inevitably, that atomic weapons are too dangerous to use and that their mere existence makes any war impossibly foolhardy, it arrives at this point by way of much interesting, and some unexpected, information. W. O. Caster, discussing the incorporation of fallout strontium into the human skeleton, explains how it happens that various authorities have differed so widely in their estimates of what constitutes a dangerous amount of this material. One school, working by averages and assuming arbitrarily that the strontium will be evenly distributed, gets a much higher safe dose than the other, which takes note of the fact that strontium does not distribute itself evenly but tends to settle in pockets. There is also a good deal of description of how estimates of damages are reached at all, making clear that much uncertainty is involved and explaining why perfectly honest scientists disagree furiously on how fallout will affect the population in general. The rumor that we are all going to die of leukemia from the bombs already exploded is flatly dismissed as rubbish; the authors are positive, however, that some people who would not have had the disease will develop it under the influence of radioactive fallout. Their number is statistically very small, but any number becomes outrageous when one thinks what would happen to a general who tested a new machine gun by firing it at the first civilian who wandered within range.

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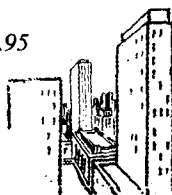
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As long as the book considers the effect of atomic debris already in the atmosphere, it is quite encouraging. The stuff will cause trouble for years to come, but the authors see no prospect of a major plague. Once it proceeds to actual war, the book becomes very grim reading indeed. Even assuming the existence of a country-wide shelter system, the lack of which is energetically deplored by Representative Chet Holifield, the authors see no hope at all for the survival of anything worth mentioning on either side in a full-scale atomic war. They offer no advice beyond, "We must find an alternative to war rather than try to make it possible again."

*Fallout* is written with extreme consideration for the limitations of the reader who is neither a physicist nor a geneticist, but even so, the chapters vary in comprehensibility. The method of creating atomic explosions and the workings of the proposed system for detecting illegal ones in the event of an international agreement to give up thermonuclear tests are made remarkably clear; the discussion of the genetic effects of radiation becomes foggier as it proceeds, possibly because precise data are simply not yet available in any quantity.

### BRINGING UP ELSA

BORN FREE (Pantheon, \$4.95) is a pet story on a grand scale. The author, JOY ADAMSON, is the wife of a game warden in Kenya. When her husband brought home three very small lion cubs, explaining with distress that he had been obliged to shoot their mother in self-defense, Mrs. Adamson adopted the orphans. The cubs were still blind when the Adamsons acquired them, and consequently accepted their human parents without demur as soon as they could see them.

Animal lovers of the most abandoned variety, the Adamsons devoted themselves to raising their cubs, assisted by an African youth and Pati, a pet rock hyrax who appointed herself nanny to the little lions. The two larger cubs were presently sent off to a zoo, but Elsa, the smallest, remained a member of the family until she was fully grown. She had an angelic disposition, a humorous taste for teasing elephants, and an inclination to sit on anybody she liked. At three hundred pounds,



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her affections were overwhelming; the Adamson's guests needed strong nerves.

The thought of putting Elsa in a zoo was more than the Adamsons could bear, but turning her loose was a problem, for she was not self-supporting. They decided to do their duty as lion parents and teach her to hunt. Much of the book describes their efforts to teach their peaceable domesticated lion how to kill game. It was a great day when Elsa knocked off an ancient but enormous water buffalo. In addition to hunting lessons, the Adamsons tried to find Elsa a husband, but they were not successful as matchmakers. It seems that a leonine debutante party involves more etiquette than meets the casual human eye.

Mrs. Adamson describes Elsa and her adventures very simply and unpretentiously, with no attempt to invent pathos or exaggerate comedy. The book is thick with charming pictures and is certain to enchant anyone who admires cats. It will also curdle their blood with envy.

#### CUSTOM-MADE

The glorious days of the "bespoke trades" are celebrated by THOMAS GIRTIN in NOTHING BUT THE BEST (McDowell, Obolensky, \$3.95). Despite the inroads of mass production, most of the elegant custom crafts devoted to outfitting the perfect gentleman still survive in England, where Mr. Girtin has surveyed their methods, personnel, and chances of survival.

Beginning with tailors, he works through shirtmakers, bootmakers, hatters, gloves, saddlers, and the manufacturers of unique guns, fishing rods, waterproofs, walking sticks, and automobiles. He even covers a chocolate shop, although here he is stretching his own definition of custom crafts to the ultimate bounds of meaning. Most of the crafts prove, as one would expect, to be largely in the hands of old reliables and very short of new blood, but a few of them retain green shoots. All are great sources of odd anecdote. The eccentric nobleman of Edwardian days has been succeeded by the eccentric with new money, and the one is as unpredictable as the other. An umbrella maker treasures the memory of the customer who demanded nine ribs instead of the

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normal eight. A bootmaker still marvels at the thigh boots studded with brilliants that he once shipped off to New Orleans, charitably assuming a Mardi gras ball.

Along with odd bits of information on the methods and history of each craft, Mr. Girtin provides amusing portraits of the craftsmen themselves. He found tailors and hatters particularly talkative, prone to reminiscence about drunken journeymen and prankish apprentices, and to complaints that young men aren't willing to work any more. In some trades, the necessary tools are no longer made anywhere, and men cling fiercely to knives and gouges handed down from their Regency forebears. In the gun and fishing-rod crafts, methods, wages, and working conditions are kept rigidly up to date, and it is notable that these trades have no trouble in attracting and keeping new workers.

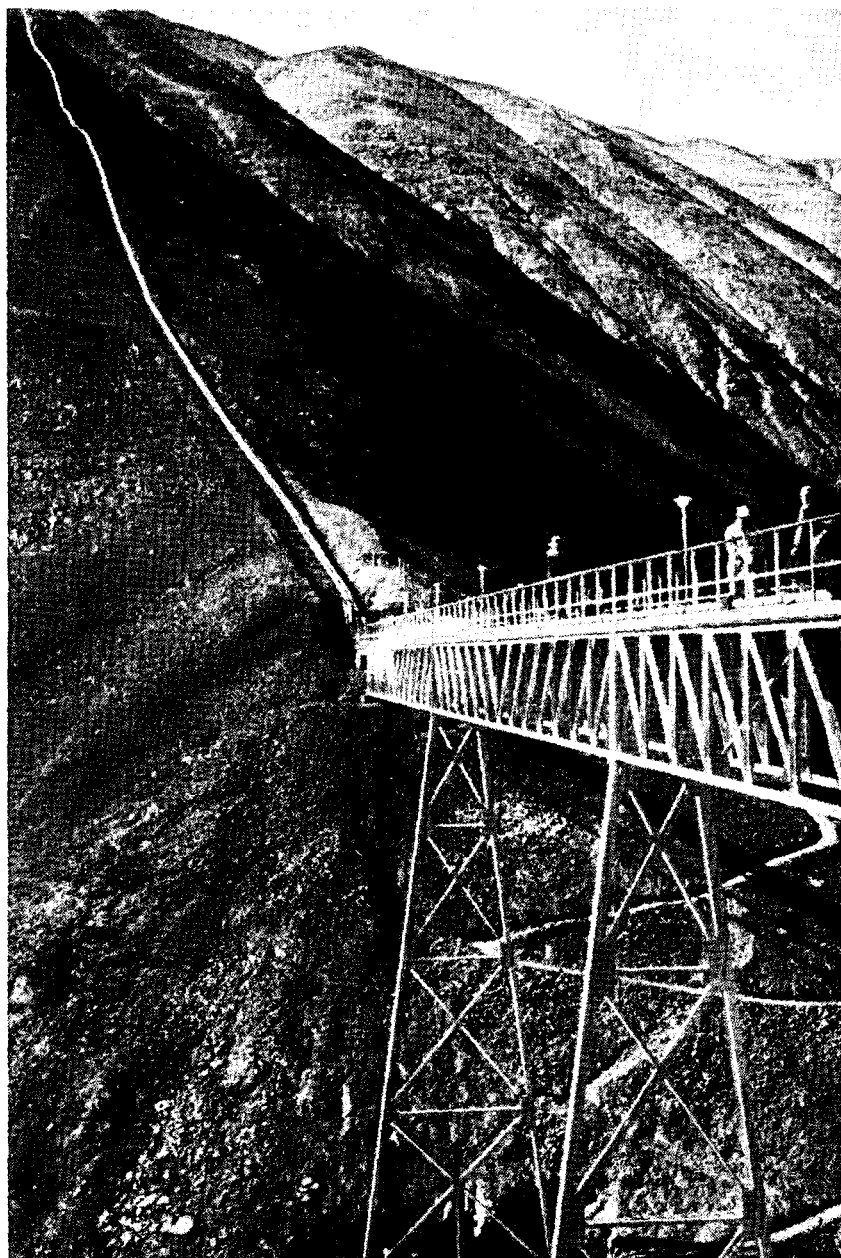
The world that Mr. Girtin reveals may be a minor facet of history, but it is odd, cranky, and pleasant.

### JAPANESE ICONS

WILLIAM WATSON'S SCULPTURE OF JAPAN (Viking, \$15.00) describes Japanese sculpture from the fifth to the fifteenth century. It is a large book, permitting the excellent photographs to be reproduced on a scale that shows details of carving and surface texture, a point too often neglected in books on sculpture.

Mr. Watson's text is devoted principally to explaining the methods used in creating the statues and to pointing out the slight variations in style occurring in different periods. There is little need for the author to delve into influences from abroad. They are few and instantly obvious: Chinese, Korean, and Indian. The Japanese, with their usual ingenuity, converted almost everything to their own style and uses, but on the evidence of the photographs, multiple arms defeated them.

Japanese sculpture is almost entirely religious, and a little more information on the significance of the iconography involved would have done no harm. The glossary in the back of the book is like a dictionary, full of disconnected facts. Presumably Mr. Watson intended to offer the Western reader a view of Japanese sculpture. On the basis of such an intention, he has done very well.



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